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REALITY

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cum permissu superiorum

God, the Highest Truth, has created and guides human intellect, not that it may daily oppose new truths to rightly established ones but rather that having eliminated errors which may have crept in, it may build truth upon truth in the same order and structure that exist in reality, the source of truth.

Pius XII

Encyclical Humani Generis

DEDICATION

This issue of REALITY is dedicated to OUR IMMACULATE MOTHER. It is the MARIAN YEAR tribute of the Philosophical and Theological Students of our Province of St. Albert the Great. It is their response to the eloquent appeal of our Holy Father, Pope Pius XII, for the faithful in every walk of life, to do homage to Our Blessed Lady, on the occasion of the one-hundredth anniversary of the infallible definition and declaration of her Immaculate Conception.

As sons of Saint Dominic Guzman, one of history's best known and loved troubadours of Mary, it is with special eagerness that they give themselves to this blessed task. "Friars of Mary" has been an honored title given to Dominicans down the centuries. Through seventy decades of years and more they have been zealous apostles of devotion to the Immaculate Mother of God in all parts of the world. Love and devotion for Mary are so vital to them that the loss of either bespeaks tragic failure in the Dominican vocation.

As members of the Province of Saint Albert the Great, they cherish as a magnetic inspirational influence in their Marian devotion, Saint Albert, whose teaching on Mary is the sure source of spiritual nourishment and guidance, quite as much today as when first penned by him seven centuries ago. Saint Albert the Great, among the peers of Mary's children, points out her mission among men in such a manner that all who read his message are stirred to love and serve Mary the better, the more to confirm their loyalty and attachment to her Divine Son, Jesus Christ.

May this issue of REALITY win blessings for our students. May our love of Mary be deepened by their efforts.

Edward L. Hughes, O.P.

As Christ is our Lord and King by a special title because He redeemed us, so the Blessed Virgin is our Lady and Queen because of the unique way in which she had cooperated toward our own redemption by giving of her own substance, by offering Him willingly for us, and by desiring, praying for, and bringing about our salvation in a singular manner.

Pius XII

Encyclical Ad Caeli Reginam

In Memoriam

"In vinea Domini . . ." "Prepare now for your work in the vineyard of the Lord." These words spring up spontaneously when we think of our beloved Master General, the Most Reverend Emmanuel Suarez, who was taken from us in an automobile accident on the thirtieth of last June. The eightieth successor of Saint Dominic had made the salvation of human souls so much a part of his every thought and action that these words to the students of Saint Albert's Province still ring with a note of unforgettable sincerity and urgency. We know of his ceaseless labors for the Church and Order since his election to the supreme office of Master General in the late summer of 1946. Nor can we mistake the purpose of his actions as a canonist in many congregations and tribunals of the Roman Curia, work which often demanded days and nights without rest.

Cardinal Ottaviani, pro-secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office in which Father Suarez worked for years as a Consultor, has most aptly portrayed the totality of dedication to the ideals of Saint Dominic. In a beautiful letter of tribute sent to the Dominicans he wrote:

"In his extraordinary and tireless activity, which caused him to be present in all parts of the world wherever the Order of Saint Dominic had need of his inspiration, guidance and encouragement in its apostolate, Father Suarez also found time to fulfill the delicate missions entrusted to him by the Holy See. In this he realized together the good of the Order and of the Church which he served with absolute fidelity, acting always with a rectitude that was exemplary."

Although we could single out numberless instances of his personal benefits to our Province, a kindly counselling and direction, a particular zeal for our African missions, for our theological and philosophical publications, a profound interest in the teaching of spiritual theology within the Houses of Study, we will postpone this task until the Spring issue of Reality which will be dedicated to his memory.

But as we close this Marian Year, there are two points of timeless significance which summarize the inner principle which guided Father Suarez throughout eight fruitful years at the head of our Dominican family. Joined to a tender devotion to the Mother of God there was a fervent love of our holy founder Dominic.

Once, when suggestions were presented to inaugurate a doctrinal course on Mariology at the Pontifical Institute "Angelicum," he exclaimed in striking words, "Definitely, by all means! We must venerate Mary and cherish her with a singular love." This love found expression in the erection of two new provinces and of many houses bearing her Marian titles.

The International Rosary Crusade found in him a most ardent director in propagating the heritage of Saint Dominic, Mary's Rosary. And because he could never separate the names of Mary and Dominic, early in 1952 he turned his efforts towards Caleruega, birthplace of the founder of the Order of Preachers. There, around the ancient tower of the Guzmáns, Father Suarez began a great work of restoration, the erection of a place of pilgrimage for the sons and daughters of Saint Dominic. It was to the actual spot where Saint Dominic was born, now an outer section of the Sisters' chapel, that his body was borne from France to its final resting place. He and his devoted secretary, Father Aureliano Martinez, who was killed in the same tragic accident at Perpignan, lie in a specially constructed tomb, a memorial to one of Dominic's most illustrious sons.

By a filial love for Saint Dominic, Emmanuel Suarez manifested to us the wellsprings of our future apostolic life. By bringing us closer to the first "Friar of Mary," he drew us to the heart of the Mother of God. This was the richest inheritance of our beloved Master General, the source of his activity, and the hope which we will carry with us "in vinea Domini."

THE MATERNITY OF MARY

IN THE COOL STILLNESS OF LATE AFTERNOON a young girl sat alone. Her hands were busy preparing for her new home because she was an espoused wife; her mind was busy thinking of the God to whom she had dedicated her life. Then, without breaking the stillness or the solitude an angel appeared and spoke to her. "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women."

Such words startled and troubled her. Truly God had been generous to her, but she had never done anything to deserve the title of "full of grace" and "blessed among women."

"Do not be afraid, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he shall be king over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

She bowed her head in submission to the divine plan which was revealed to her. Then, slowly and questioningly, she raised her eyes. God had inspired her to take a vow of perpetual virginity, and now He asks her to bear a son, the very Son of God. How can she be the Mother of God and yet remain a virgin dedicated to God?

"The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; and therefore the Holy One to be born shall be called the Son of God."

And Mary said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word."

Mary consented to become the Mother of Jesus Christ, and this divine maternity, according to most theologians, is the source of all her graces and privileges. But what is the meaning of the Motherhood of Mary, what riches are hidden in the phrase "Divine Maternity?" Each separate

aspect of Mary's motherhood must be examined and analyzed so that this brightest gem in Our Lady's crown will stand out with its full lustre.

There are many surfaces that need to be cut and polished. Mary was a mother in the purely physical or animal sense of the word; she was a mother in the higher human sense of the word. The Son she bore was a Divine Person and her Son was the Redeemer of mankind.

Motherhood requires three distinct actions, conception, gestation, and parturition. The ovum must be fertilized in the mother's womb, it must grow and develop, and finally the child is brought forth into the world. Through these three physical processes physical motherhood becomes a reality and a new life is generated.

Mary realized in herself all these functions. Scripture is very clear on this subject. At the Annunciation the angel Gabriel told Mary, "Thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son."[1]

In Matthew as well the motherhood of Mary is proclaimed.

> Now when Mary his Mother had been bethrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be *with child* by the Holy Spirit. . . . But while he (Joseph) thought on these things, behold an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Joseph, son of David, to take to thee Mary thy wife, for that which is *begotten* in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall *bring forth* a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins." Now all this came to pass that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet[2] might be fulfilled, "Behold, the virgin shall be with *child*, and shall *bring forth* a son; and they shall call his name Emmanuel"; which is, interpreted, "God with us."[3]

Mary conceived, she was with child, and she was to bring forth a Son.

The Fathers, the councils, and the Church in its teaching, following the explicit statement of the Gospels, have all unanimously agreed that Mary is the Mother of Christ. Her womb was made fertile by the supernatural action of the Holy Spirit; she carried Christ, the flesh of her flesh, in her womb "until the days for her to be delivered were fulfilled, and she brought forth her firstborn son."[4] Mary remained a virgin in conception and parturition, and received in addition the glory of motherhood.

Human motherhood, however, includes something higher and more sublime than its mere physical aspects. Every properly human act must be a deliberate act flowing from intellectual knowledge and free will. Motherhood, therefore, if it is to be more than the result of brutish passion, must have its roots in free and deliberate consent. The real beauty of

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[1] Luke 1:31. All New Testament quotations are taken from the Confraternity version.

[2] Cf. Isaias 7:14.

[3] Matt. 1:18-23.

[4] Luke 2:6.

maternity is found in the mutual love which unites body and soul in the generation of a new life, an image of oneself, a son.

It was for this reason that the Almighty God awaited the free consent of His humble handmaid before carrying out the divine plan of the Incarnation. Mary was the human Mother of Jesus Christ, and she must not only perform the physical functions of a mother, but must perform them willingly and lovingly. The words of Mary, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word," express her humble consent, and the source of her consent; the love which made her fertile was Love Itself, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. As truly as each of us received our flesh and blood from our mother, so was Christ willingly conceived and nurtured from the body of His Virgin Mother. By her submission to the will of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, by her intimate union with the Spouse of her soul, Mary became the Mother of Jesus.

Who was this Jesus that was born of Mary? He was man, indeed, but more than a man for He was God. In the one Person Who is Jesus Christ there is united a perfect human nature and the Divine Nature. The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, begotten by the Father from all eternity, assumed a human nature and was begotten in time of the Virgin Mary. Mary, therefore, being the Mother of Jesus Christ is the Mother of God.

Mary's Son was also the Redeemer of the world. The disastrous evil of original sin and all its crippling effects were conquered and continue to be conquered only by the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ. The suffering Redeemer was God's chosen way for the salvation of men; the humble Virgin was God's chosen temple in which the victim was prepared. Incomprehensible is the glory of Mary for she was made worthy to conceive and bear Jesus Christ, the God-man-Redeemer.

The Eternal Father predestined Mary to the Divine Maternity and filled her with all the gifts and graces required for the perfect fulfillment of that sublime dignity. Motherhood, as we have seen, rises above mere animal instinct and reaches its highest perfection when it flows from deliberate free consent. The *fiat* of Mary, therefore, must have been a perfectly free act. Further, since the greatness of an act is judged by its term, Mary's free consent to be the Mother of God-man-Redeemer, flowing from the efficacious movement of Divine grace, is the greatest possible human act.

There are four enemies which might have destroyed the freedom and perfection of Mary's motherhood. Her motherhood may have resulted from external violence, fear may have caused her consent, she may have been blinded by concupiscence, or ignorance may have lessened the deliberateness of her consent.

In the first place, Our Lady was not forced to accept God's proposal by an external coercion. This would have reduced the motherhood of Mary to the level of a mechanical action. Would Mary be the worthy Mother of God if that freedom which is the perfection of human action was denied her? Mary's willingness to do all according to God's word sprang from the interior depths of her free will and loving heart.

Nor were fear or concupiscence the reason for the Virgin Mother's assent. The fitting conception of Christ could not result from slavish fear or blind passion. Truly her emotions were not stifled or dormant. Mary had a deep filial fear of God, the love and desire of every mother filled her heart, but passion in no way clouded the clarity of her vision or the strength of her judgment. Divine Wisdom preserved His Daughter from every stain of sin and evil of concupiscence lest she prove an unworthy Mother.

The deliberateness of an action also depends on knowledge. Our free acts are rooted in a practical judgment, and without knowledge judgment is impossible. The freedom of Mary's consent, therefore, depends in great measure on the perfection of her knowledge concerning the Son Whom she was to mother. Did she know at the time of the Annunciation that her Son was the Messiah? the Son of God, the suffering Redeemer? The freedom of her consent seems to require it; the dignity of her Divine Maternity seems to demand it.

It must be remembered that Mary was no ordinary woman. She had been conceived without sin, and had been filled with grace from the first moment of her existence. The blight of sin never corrupted the depth of her perception. Concupiscence never cast its shadow over the acuteness of her intellect. Error was barred forever from her mind. Then into this chaste soul the Holy Spirit poured His sevenfold Gifts and a faith deeper and more active than in the greatest saints. In the temple she had studied the Scriptures, the prophets, and the Psalms from her childhood. She desired and prayed continually and fervently for the Messiah so clearly foretold in the sacred writings. Could such a woman fail to recognize the word of God contained in the angel's message?

Mary certainly knew that Jesus was the promised Messiah. The words of the angel left no doubt in her mind. "Son of the Most High." "The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father." "He shall be king over the house of Jacob forever." Such phrases may sound ambiguous to our ears, but to the ears of a pious Jew of Our Lord's time the meaning was unequivocal.

Beyond this Mary knew that the Messiah, her Son, was the Son of God. Gabriel at the Annunciation said, "And therefore the Holy One to be born shall be called the Son of God."[5] The angel revealed to Mary

[5] Luke 1:35.

the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, the Most High, the Son of the Most High and the Power of the Most High. And this Divine Son was to be her Son.

Despite the silence of the account of St. Luke, Mary also must have foreseen the sufferings of the Redeemer. It was not necessary that she know the details of the manner and extent of His passion, but the perfect freedom of her consent seems to require some foreknowledge that the Christ was to be a suffering Redeemer. Our Lady knew that the kingdom of God consisted of a happiness far above the pleasures and concupiscence of this world, that pride and weakness of the flesh are the cause of sin. This knowledge coupled with the manifold references in the Old Testament to the trials and tribulations of the Messiah would give Mary a deep insight into the sufferings required by God for the salvation of the world.

Note well that this knowledge of the Virgin Mother concerning her Son was not natural knowledge. Human reason cannot contact by its own power the mysteries of the Trinity, the Incarnation of the Son of God, and the Redemption. These supernatural truths knowable only by faith were opened to her through the hints and prophecies of the Old Testament, the clear message of the angel, and, more than from any other source, through the illumination and inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Mary's *fiat*, therefore, was a perfectly free action. Freed from all coercion and filled with all requisite knowledge she could humbly and sincerely and reasonably assent to become God's Mother.

In conclusion Mary is the Mother of the God-man-Redeemer in the highest and completest sense of the word. Her maternity is physical since she physically conceived and bore Christ. Her maternity is human because she gave her willing and free consent. Her maternity is Divine for the source of her consent is the supernatural knowledge and love of God, the object of her consent is the Son of God made man, the Spouse of this Virgin Mother is the very Spirit of God. The Motherhood of Mary, the glorious gem of Our Lady, so human and conformed to nature, yet so divine and supernatural, is the greatest dignity a human being can have outside of being personally united to God as was Jesus Christ.

Cletus Wessels, O.P.

MR. CHESTERTON AND THE MOTHER OF GOD

THE WORLD IS IN TROUBLE, and the trouble is even more grave than usual. There is division among nations and division within nations. Because no house divided against itself can long stand, something must be done to strengthen the house before it crumbles to the ground. Nearly everyone admits that the world needs help, but few seem to realize the kind of help necessary. One alone of the many voices urging the world to right itself speaks out with incontestable authority, the Catholic Church. The Church says that the world needs its Mother. It begs the world to turn to the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God; for through her alone can come the divine assistance the world so sorely needs. Mary is the Queen of the Universe, the Mother of God and the Mother of men. She is the hope of the world.

The Church, to impress the need for Mary's help more forcibly on the minds of men, has dedicated this year especially to her. This is the Marian Year; the year that will honor the Mother of God in every possible way. Her intercession and guidance will be implored by millions the world over. Theologians in every country, at the behest of the Church, are daily expounding the glory and the power that is Mary's. Indeed, the theologian will be responsible for the greater part of what will be written and spoken of Mary in this her year. But the theologian has no monopoly on singing the praises of Mary. Others also have seen the beauty and the gracefulness that is the Mother of God. Some of these are poets, and one of these is G. K. Chesterton.

Mr. Chesterton portrays every aspect of Mary in his poetry concerning her, almost all of which is contained in a little volume called *The Queen of the Seven Swords.* He honors her as Queen of Heaven and Earth, as Mother of God and men, as the Mediatrix of all graces, as the Immaculate Virgin conceived without sin. But, of all the titles by which he reveres Mary in his poems, by far his favorite is "Our Lady." It is less pretentious than her other titles perhaps, but quite in keeping with the simplicity of Chesterton's character. His constant references to "Our

Lady" impress most clearly on his readers' minds the personal element that is involved in Mary's relationship with men and indeed is probably the most valuable of all his reflections for the modern world to appreciate.

This article makes no pretense at an analysis of the poetry of a great Catholic author. It is merely an attempt to assess the place of the Mother of God in the affairs of men as seen through the eyes of a poet. Mr. Chesterton was chosen because he couples a wise appraisal of human affairs with a profound realization of the role of Mary in God's plan for the universe. Her relationship to men and her interest in the activities of mankind is most intimate. She has care of every single soul and of all souls. It is through her that men go to God. She is the help of the world.

Briefly then, for Mr. Chesterton, Mary is the embodiment of all that the Church has to say to humanity, and a great deal of what she embodies he says or has her say in his poetry. In order that her place in the plan of Providence be appreciated and in order to better understand her relationship between God and man, she must be seen first of all as the second Eve. She is the one person powerful enough to crush the head of the serpent and the one pure enough to bear the Redeemer of mankind in her womb. It is in this light that Chesterton views Our Lady in his poem, "The Return of Eve." Here the fall of man is lamented, for never again will there be one as mighty as Adam until God himself "walks the world with the mask of man for a vizor." Yet when God looked down on Eve, fallen with her mate, He decided that there must be one of His creatures who would never be a victim of Satan's guile. There would be one who would surpass the original innocence of our first parents, one who would be so filled with grace that the slightest hint of sin would never be connected with her name. Some of the power and the glory of the Mother of God is seen when,

> The Lord looked down on the beauty of Woman shattered,
> A fallen sky,
> Crying! O crown and wonder and world's desire
> Shall this too die?
> Lo, it repenteth me that this too is taken;
> I will repay,
> I will repair and repeat of the ancient pattern
> Even in this clay.
>
> And this alone out of all things fallen and formless
> I will form anew,
> And this red lily of all the uprooted garden
> Plant where it grew,
> That the dear dead thing that was all and only a woman
> Without stain or scar
> Rise, fallen no more with Lucifer, Son of Morning,
> The Morning Star.[1]

[1] G. K. Chesterton, *Queen of the Seven Swords* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1946), p.4.

It is impossible to measure Mary's greatness. Her fullness of grace, her undefiled purity, her intimacy with God as the Mother of His Son, cannot be accurately described with words. The soul is more dazzled by her splendor than the eye is dazzled by the bright summer sun. Man, remembering all that God has done to Mary, can only cry with St. Paul, "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God!"[2] Though Mary is incomparably more magnificent than any and all of God's works, that is no reason why the poet should not try to catch some glimpse of her beauty with his pen. With brilliant metaphors Mr. Chesterton delightfully describes her as,

. . . . . the only glass
That would not break with that unbearable light;
. . . . . That unfallen star
In the strange starry overturn of space,
When earth and sky changed places for an hour
And heaven looked upward in a human face.[3]

Rightly, therefore, does the Church salute Mary as "Queen of the Universe" in the beautiful Marian Year prayer. There is nothing in the whole of creation that is not under the sovereignty of this Queen. Everything is in her loving gaze; nothing escapes her loving smile. As the universe is but a reflection of God's infinite love, so it is also a reflection of Mary's goodness since she is the Mother of the Creator. Chesterton, too, salutes her as "Queen of the Universe." In a poem titled "The Trinkets" she is ruler and the world is,

A wandering world of rivers,
A wavering world of trees,
If the world grow dim and dizzy
With all changes and degrees,
It is but Our Lady's Mirror
Hung dreaming in its place,
Shining with only shadows
Till she wakes it with her face.[4]

Because Mary is at once Mother and Mediatrix the whole universe belongs to her. God has given it to her much as a loving father bestows a gift on a beloved daughter. But what created gift sincerely presented does justice to the one receiving it? Even the striking majesty of the heavens and the grandeur of the earth are slight in comparison to the magnificence of Mary.

The standing whirlpool of the stars,
The wheel of all the world,

is merely,

. . . . . a ring on Our Lady's finger
With the suns and moons empearled
With stars for stones to please her
Who sits playing with her rings
With the great heart that a woman has
And the love of little things.[5]

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[2] Rom. 11:33.
[3] Chesterton, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 41.
[5] Chesterton, *loc. cit.*

Queen of the Universe! Queen of the Angels! Queen of Heaven itself! Mary's nobility is beyond all human imagining. Although only those in heaven know in some full measure the true nature of her regality, her delight is in ruling over the kingdom of this earth as well as the Kingdom of Heaven. We poor subjects of the former kingdom might well ask with Elizabeth, "And whence is this to me that the Mother of my Lord should come unto me?"[6] Why should she who is Queen of Paradise condescend to be Queen of a sinful world? In a poem called "Regina Angelorum" Mr. Chesterton explains the mystery as only a mystery can be explained, through the light of faith. Actually the explanation is only a statement of fact; explanation enough for those who believe. Heaven rejoiced and the hosts of heaven made their submission to her when she was wonderfully assumed, but her children on earth ought not to think of her as being fled from them. It is still our right to call her Our Lady and Our Queen though she was exalted above all the angels and saints and crowned Queen of Heaven by the Holy Trinity. She does not forget us; she cannot forget us, and the explanation is: ". . . for she was ours." That Christ gave her, His Mother, to us is enough. Faith needs only to know that for all she went into the "strange Country" of heaven, she was still ours. G. K. put it like this:

Our Lady went into a strange country,
Our Lady, for she was ours
And had run on the little hills behind the houses
And pulled small flowers;
But she rose up and went into a strange country
With strange thrones and powers.

Our Lady went into a strange country
And they crowned her for a queen,
For she needed never to be stayed or questioned
But only seen;
And they were broken down under unbearable beauty
As we have been.

Our Lady wears a crown in a strange country,
The crown he gave,
But she has not forgotten to call to her old companions,
To call and crave;
And to hear her calling a man might arise and thunder
On the doors of the grave.[7]

Mary indeed has not forgotten. At the throne of her Divine Son she constantly makes intercession for her subjects of this other "strange country," the earth. While she reigns in heaven as Queen, she is no more removed from the world than she was when she stood sorrowfully beneath the cross on Calvary and regenerated the children of men with her son. She is nearer to men and the sons of men than the child in the womb is to its mother. Those who hold her name dear, who value her protection as priceless, know well the nearness of her presence. No family who calls on her for help is turned away unheard. A home that

[6] Luke 1:43.
[7] Chesterton, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

begs her blessing is fortified and filled with joy. Where she has made her abode there is no boredom, jealousy, separation, or divorce; but rather, understanding, confidence, and love. Wherever she has been welcomed she is,

> A voice that sings about the house,
> A nurse that scares the nightmares off,
> A mother nearer than a spouse.[8]

But not all homes are happy; not all men live in Mary's embrace, though she lingers near them waiting patiently and pityingly for them to turn to her. Some have rejected her by rejecting Christ and His Church; some have been subtly led away from her by lies and presumptions; many have never heard of her. Yet all men need her – the communist who hates our religion, as well as the savage who has never heard of it, the scoffer who would submit to no woman, as well as the dupe who believes she is a myth. The fact remains, nevertheless, that they who do not know the warmth of her love will only find the peace of Christ through her. She is their Mother and Christ's Mother. She it is who brings the sinner to his Lord and gives the world its Saviour. Mary, therefore, is the hope of all those who are not enriched by the consolations of her intercession, for:

> Whom had she greeted and not graced in greeting,
> Whom did she touch and touch not to his peace?[9]

If men but knew and loved Mary, how quickly would the darkness that dims so many souls be dispelled. Where she has care of souls there is no hatred, greed, or lust. The very thought of her ineffable beauty is enough to soften the most hardened heart. What man calling on the Tower of Ivory, the House of Gold, the Mystical Rose, is not drawn above the weakness of his fallen nature? As Mr. Chesterton says,

> There is never a crack in the Ivory Tower
> Or a hinge to groan in the House of Gold,
> Or a leaf of the Rose in the wind to wither
> And she grows young as the world grows old.[10]

There is no limit to Mary's power. There is no sinner for whom she will not make intercession. The sun's rays pouring their warmth onto the earth are weak compared to the warmth of the rays of grace she is capable of procuring for the souls of men. Chesterton sees her as,

> A woman clothed with the sun returning
> To clothe the sun when the sun is cold.[11]

For all her unlimited power and willingness to intercede it is not an easy thing to give oneself to Mary's care. In these days especially

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[8] *Ibid.*, p. 2.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 6.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 20.
[11] *Loc. cit.*

it is simple to let others do our thinking for us, as others dare to do. Chesterton hated few things more than those which subtly lead people from reason and righteousness. At the same time he knew that without Mary's help, no one beats off the onslaught of deceit that daily tries even the most virtuous. G. K. has seen that she is to be more trusted than the wise of the world. He has weighed her whisperings and found them to be of more value than the profoundest utterances of the philosophers, more certain than the most definite claims of the scientists. She knows the truth and all who would follow her are brought to it.

> O trumpet of the intolerant truth!
> Thou are more full of grace and truth
> For the hopes of the world than the world that made them,
> The world that murdered the loves of our youth.
> Thou are more kind to our dreams, Our Mother,
> Than the wise that wove us the dreams for shade.[12]

The world is in trouble and the great majority of men do not know where to look for help. A great part of the world is being led by godless masters who believe that man is his own last end. This part of the world is enslaved. Atom and hydrogen bomb defenses are being planned and revised daily. Nations sit at the same peace councils and unashamedly give public information as to how many bombs it will take to destroy this or that city.

Amid all the talk of peace, amid all the preparations for war, the one same voice rings out consistently, urgently, pleadingly. It is the voice of God speaking through His Church saying that the truth will make men free, and that the only true peace is His peace, and His peace is not of this world. More than that, the Church says that if men would have the swiftest, safest way to peace and freedom they should appeal to Mary, the Mother of the Prince of Peace. There is a poem by Mr. Chesterton which echoes the Church's admonition to call on Mary. The words are different but the thought the same.

> Look in what other face for understanding
> But hers, who bore the Child that brought the sword,
> Hang in what other house, trophy and tribute
> The broken heart and the unbroken word?[13]

Mary herself has warned the world of its grave danger. At Fatima, where she appeared in 1917, she pleaded with men to pray and do penance if they would avert the awful consequences of God's wrath. Mary came to lead the world out of its ignorance, its pride and its folly. Brutal, satanic war bred by ambitious and fearful men settles nothing. Chesterton clearly sees the folly of those who would think as they like. He berates the proud and unreasonable men who would deify things of their own choice and making, and refers them to the Seat of Wisdom if they would be helped.

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[12] Chesterton, *loc. cit.*
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

O breakers! great Iconoclasts!
When will your raking hammers find
What statues spring up with a word,
What icons have built up in the mind,
Or learn by hacking if the Form
Be all a part or part a whole,
Or grind out of your gods made dust
What is the sign and what the soul,
Or chase what images have been hung
In the air where any song was sung,
Seeing if the sword can put asunder
All that was wedded with the tongue.
(Sedes Sapientiae, ora pro nobis.)[14]

The evils are widespread, the dangers are grave, but despite it all there is the faithful minority hoping even where hope seems to have fled. These are the people not unlike Alfred the Great in Chesterton's "Ballad of the White Horse," whose army is shattered and beaten by the pagan Danes and who himself is "broken to his knee." This great disaster for Alfred and for England leaves him alone, friendless, and weary of it all. Chesterton would remind us that even in great trouble Mary is always ready to help, for it is when Alfred is most dejected and tempted to despair that Mary comes to point the way.

Her face was like an open word
When brave men speak and choose,
The very color of her coat
Were better than good news.[15]

Alfred, his heart longing to see freedom and peace restored to his people and Christianity to his homeland, asks only one question, begs only one answer, the word that will uphold his hope.

When our last bow is broken, Queen,
And our last javelin cast,
Under some sad, green evening sky,
Holding a ruined cross on high
Under warm westland grass to lie,
Shall we come home at last?[16]

Mary replies as Alfred must have known she would—indeed, as she must reply to all who seek her aid:

The gates of heaven are lightly locked,
We do not guard our gain,
The heaviest hind may easily
Come silently and suddenly
Upon me in a lane.

And any little maid that walks
In good thoughts apart,
May break the guard of the Three Kings
And see the dear and dreadful things
I hid within my heart.

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[14] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

[15] G. K. Chesterton, *The Collected Poems of G. K. Chesterton* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1951), p. 215.

[16] *Loc. cit.*

The meanest man in grey fields gone,
Behind the set of sun
Heareth between star and other star
Through the door of the darkness fallen ajar
The council, eldest of things that are,
The talk of the Three in One.[17]

That is answer enough to Alfred's question, but Mary does not stop there. For the great king in his trial she has some special words. "The gates of heaven are lightly locked" but the way there is often difficult and dark. Alfred, as well as every individual who calls on her, needs to realize that complete submission is necessary if the hardships and sorrows are to be fully overcome. G. K., knows well that the way to peace is through suffering. Mary's final words to Alfred come as no surprise.

I tell you naught for your comfort,
Yea, naught for your desire,
Save that the sky grows darker yet
And the sea rises higher.

Night shall be thrice night over you,
And heaven an iron cope,
Do you have joy without a cause
Yea, faith without a hope?[18]

These are hard sayings, yet Mary leaves Alfred in renewed hope and contented spirit. Why? Because he has a cause which is worth fighting for, the restoration of his country to Christ, and he has hope precisely because his faith has not failed him. No matter how dark the sky grows, be it devoid of moon and star; no matter how high the sea rises, though it pound and smash against the cities of the world, Mary will be there. Alfred calls upon her and is strengthened, he hopes in her and he is led. It is thus with all who do likewise. With Mr. Chesterton we must all pray to her for ourselves and for her people.

Lady of all that have loved the people
Light over roads astray,
Maze of steading and street and steeple,
Great as a heart that loved the people;
Stand on the crown of the soaring down,
Lift up your hands and pray.[19]

With her to intercede who can be fainthearted? With her to lead who can go astray? With her to comfort who can be without joy? Persecution may break the bodies of many for a time. Cities may be battered with bombs. Antichrist himself may come forth against the world. In the long run it matters not, Our Lady will still reign, Queen of Heaven and Earth, Mother of God and men,

. . . . . erect in the earth's despair
And arise against heaven interceding,
Whose name is Cause of Our Joy, in the
Doorway of death she stood.[20]

Paschal MacDonald, O.P.

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[17] *Loc. cit.*
[18] *Loc. cit.*
[19] Chesterton, *op. cit.*, p. 70.
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 43.

MARY AND THE EUCHARIST

THE EVANGELISTS PORTRAY FOR US in a most vivid manner the miraculous powers of Christ. We read of the man sick with palsy who was told, "Rise, take up thy pallet and walk,"[1] of the daughter of Jairus who was restored to life, of the woman in the crowd who experienced the wonderful effect of Christ's power by touching the hem of His garment, and of the son of the widow of Naim who was restored to his mother because he was her only son. These are miraculous effects of Christ's divine power.

Today, upon the testimony of Christ, men are offered something of infinitely greater value; men are offered the sacraments. The sacraments are a normal means of our sanctification, a source of grace in our souls. We know that it is Christ's humanity, His Sacred Passion and Death, that is the inexhaustible source of this saving grace that sanctifies us in the sacraments. We know that through the sacraments we are born, nourished, healed and fortified. It is thus that we are united to Christ and become images modeled on Him, and at last reach "unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ."[2] Daily we are offered the opportunity to experience these divine effects through the worthy reception of Holy Communion.

Mary is the Mother of Christ, the Mother of Divine Grace. It is through Mary that we are made ready to experience the wonderful effects of the powers of Her Son, Our Redeemer. Holy Scripture tells us of Mary's constant efforts to give her Son to others in order that they might share her precious gift. In the cold, wind-swept cave of Bethlehem Mary shared her Son with the shepherds and with the Magi. At the time of her purification in the temple of Jerusalem, she offered the Child to Simeon, a just and holy man, who received Him into his arms and blessed God saying, "Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word in peace; because my eyes have seen thy salvation."[3] Again, at the marriage feast of Cana Mary revealed her willingness to share her

[1] John 5:8.
[2] Eph. 4:13.
[3] Luke 2:29.

Son with others when she prevailed upon Him to work a miracle for the wedding party. But the greatest of these offerings was the offering Mary made on Calvary, the gift of her Son as Redeemer of the world. When the hour had come, like a priest offering a Victim, Mary was ready to offer her Son that we might live.

The redemption of mankind began at the moment of Mary's collaboration with the Divine will. The humanity of Christ, which is the source of our sanctification, was given to us through Mary. The Body born of the Virgin Mary is presented to us now in the sacrament of the Eucharist. This is the sacrament of redemption. It is by means of this sacrament that Mary gives life to her children. We know that Mary's part in this sacrament is not of a visible nature because God did not give the priestly power to Mary; therefore, her mission in this sacrament is an invisible one, the preparing of our souls for a more fruitful reception of the Holy Eucharist.

To receive Holy Communion is to receive the whole and entire Christ; yet, only too often, little permanent fruit is derived from the reception of this sacrament. But the answer to this problem is found in the soul of the communicant and not in the sacrament. The Eucharist will produce its fruit if it meets no obstacles in our souls. The graces of this sacrament will be received more abundantly as our dispositions are more perfect. These dispositions for the fruitful reception of the Eucharist are obtained for us by Mary's prayer. It is Mary who will lead us to those virtues which will enrich our reception of Holy Communion and enable us to receive God's graces in abundance. It is Mary who will give Jesus to us.

The life of Mary enumerates those virtues and dispositions which will enable the soul to be a fitting tabernacle for the Living God. In Mary dwell humility, faith, hope, charity, a spirit of poverty, and the desire for union with God exemplified in the highest manner. These are the virtues and dispositions we should strive to perfect, so that our Holy Communions will be more fruitful.

God demands a certain cooperation on our part in order that we may share the Divine Life more abundantly. He seeks in our souls these dispositions, so that the grace of the sacrament will be more fruitful; but these dispositions *do not cause grace,* for this is due to the sacrament alone. Holy Communion is a sacrament of the living and presupposes the state of grace in the one who receives it, just as bread presupposes life in the body which is nourished by it. The communicant receives this sacrament not because he is perfect but rather to become so. Holy Communion is not a reward anymore than material bread. God comes to us not to crown our virtues, but to give us strength to practice acts of virtue, to give us the means to lead a good Christian life, to help us sanctify ourselves. To refrain from Holy Communion, therefore, would

be tantamount to refusing a prescribed remedy and depriving ourselves of life. God gave us the Eucharist not because we are meek, humble, and recollected, but that we may become so and persevere in these virtues.[4] The Holy Eucharist is a gift of God's merciful bounty, an invitation to deepen and solidify the Divine Life in us. We have need of this grace because we are poor and weak. It is the remedy against our spiritual infirmities, it is a power against our enemies. It is our strength, our joy, and our consolation. It insures our progress on the road to holiness. It is our union with God.

The starting-point of the mystery of Christ is the Incarnation. Christ becomes Man. This is the mystery of self-renunciation, of self-abasement, and of the spirit of poverty. At this moment, Mary was filled with God's graces. Her faith illumined for her God's greatness and her own nothingness. Her humility protected her from every inordinate movement of spirit; in Mary there was no self-satisfaction. She was detached from self, bent on serving God, turned wholly towards Him. This glorious mystery is a brilliant star illuminating Mary's humility. Mary was disposed to receive God's graces, for it was she who was to give Christ to the world.

Humility is described by St. Thomas as "a disposition which gives the soul easy access to spiritual and divine goods."[5] Humility, since it removes pride, is the foundation of the spiritual life. It is the ground upon which the virtues flourish and God's graces are received in abundance. The essential act of humility consists in abasing ourselves before God, that is, in recognizing our inferiority, our littleness, and our dependence upon God. Through humility we remove self and look wholly toward God. The humility of Mary permitted God to act freely in her soul; the humble soul abases itself before the Most High, so that God may act freely in it.[6] True humility fills the heart with the desire to serve and glorify God. If you desire your soul to receive the divine gifts in Holy Communion, follow Mary in her renunciation of self and in her humility. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord be it done to me according to thy word."

God wills to impart Himself to others. The gift of God to men, Jesus Christ, is also the gift of Mary. Corresponding to God's willingness to share His life with those who have become members of the Mystical Body, we must be willing to receive Him. The desire to receive the Holy Eucharist is a condition of fruitful reception. We do not eat unless we are hungry; so too, in the supernatural life, there exists a "hunger" for the Eucharist, that is, a hunger for Jesus Christ. This desire admits

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[4] Eymard, Blessed Peter Julian, *Eucharistic Handbook* (The Sentinel Press, NYC, N.Y.) P. 235.

[5] St. Thomas, Summa Theologiae II-II, q. 161, a. 5, ad. 4.

[6] Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages,* Vol. II, Chap. 12 (B. Herder Book Company, St. Louis, Mo.).

of degrees of intensity, but the stronger it is, the more profitable the Communion.

Mary enkindles the desire for God in our hearts, especially the longing for the Eucharist, which gives her Son to us. This hunger for God is not a sensible longing, but a spiritual desire, a will intent on the spiritual food which will draw us into closer union with God, renew our strength, and calm our passions.[7] God gives Himself to all who call upon Him. "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink."[8] When we receive Holy Communion, grace is imparted to our soul according to the energy of its desires. A good measure of this desire can be found in the earnestness with which we struggle to remove all venial sin and distracting attachments. The grace of the sacrament is received in proportion to our will to struggle against these defects. It is well for us to remember that Christ is our model, who sacrificed Himself even to the death of the Cross. Pray to Mary to obtain this ardent desire for the Eucharist, so that the graces of the sacrament will be received in abundance.

St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, speaks of the Eucharist in terms of unity and charity. "Because the bread is one, we though many, are one body, all of us who partake of the one bread."[9] We know that unity and charity are essential to the Mystical Body of Christ. When we receive Holy Communion we are participating in this Sacrifice as brothers-in-Christ. Our Communion is not merely an act of personal devotion, but it is an act in union with the members of the Mystical Body. We know that fraternal charity plays an important role in this unity. It we want God to flood our souls with Divine Life, our hearts must be filled with foregiveness and love.

Mary had the most complete knowledge of Christ's love for man, the love which gave us the Eucharist. In order to appreciate this gift of Love we ought to go, as Mary did, to its source, to the sacrifice it demanded of Our Lord. Calvary shows the extent of God's love for men, and the Mass enables man to contact the Victim immolated perpetually on our altars.

Charity is a supernatural virtue, that is, a virtue directly concerned with God: charity causes a love of God, not only in order to possess Him in heaven, but because of His infinite goodness. Charity makes us love God above all else. It is the "mater et radix" of all the other virtues, for it ordains the acts of the other virtues to Him.[10] Charity is the highest of the virtues and will endure forever. Faith will give place to the

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[7] Bernadot, O.P., M.V., *Our Lady in Our Life* (Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland), p. 49.
[8] John 7:37.
[9] I Cor. 9:17.
[10] St. Thomas, *op. cit.*, I-II, q. 62., a. 4.

vision of God, hope will be supplanted by the possession of God, but "charity, never falleth away." Charity is an infused virtue given by God at baptism. God alone can produce and increase it in souls. Virtuous acts cannot produce an increase of charity, but these acts can merit its increase and prepare one to receive it. The reception of Holy Communion should be accompanied by a fervent and generous act of love of God, to dispose the soul to receive the graces of the Eucharist in full.

Moreover, the marvelous manifestation of the divine generosity embodied in the Holy Eucharist deserves a special act of thanksgiving. For it is a special effect of this sacrament alone that it should excite the soul to make an act of charity.[11] This gift is far superior to any miraculous cure, and calls for a generous act of gratitude. It is difficult at times to perform acts of thanksgiving and gratitude, but the real proof of love is fidelity to Christ. Mary offered her Divine Son to the Father with love and unselfishness. She is an exemplar in this matter. In union with Mary we ought to offer our work and sufferings of each day as a thanksgiving for the gift of the Eucharist. Every gift calls for a thanksgiving, and the greater the gift, the greater should be the gratitude.

Adoration should be a part of our act of thanksgiving. To adore is to share the life of Mary, for her life was one continual act of adoration from the moment of the Incarnation until she was gloriously assumed into heaven. To adore is to share the life of the saints who never cease to praise and adore the goodness, the love and glory of God. An act of adoration, although specifically an act of religion, is also a perfect exercise of the theological virtues, for it includes acts of faith, hope and charity.

A necessary consequence of our faith is a devotion to the Most Holy and Immaculate Virgin Mary. How can we adore Christ in the Eucharist without honoring the one who has given Him to us? Devotion to Mary is the filial duty of every Christian. At the present time in the Church, there is found a great and universal veneration of Mary. Every great religious family boasts of its singular devotion to her. She is the universal protectress of God's children.

After the Ascension, Mary's life was centered in the Cenacle. There she spent herself in adoration and thanksgiving for the great privilege God had bestowed upon her, to be Mother of the Savior. The first days of the Church saw Mary, the pillar of strength, rallying the Apostles about her. She was their courage, for she was their Mother. The words of the Dying Christ, "Woman, behold thy son,"[12] signify Mary's singular powers over mankind. In these few words Christ gave to Mary her mission and the means whereby it was to be accomplished. Mary was to aid all men in attaining their eternal goal and the means to the end,

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[11] *Ibid.*, III, q. 79, a. 4.
[12] John 19:26.

God's graces, were to be distributed by Mary; thus Mary became the Mother of mankind. She was the one appointed to keep man on the narrow path of virtue.

There was nothing brilliant in the actions of Mary. Her life was passed in silence and obscurity, for she was to be the model of the hidden life, a life hidden in God. We can be certain that Mary's adoration was profound and intimate. Her gift to God was herself. Her life was one of love. Her love was complete, there were no conditions, no reservation. She was a stranger to self. There was nothing conspicuous, nothing exterior, all her labors were for God and known only to Him. Yet, Mary was the creature chosen by God to be the Mother of the Word Incarnate.[13]

"Ave Maria, gratia plena." The Eternal Father gave to Mary the fulness of grace because of her Divine Maternity. In God's providence Mary was to give Christ to the world, to become the New Eve, and to become the Co-redemptress of the world. The Divine Maternity was the foundation and source of her many privileges. In keeping with her sublime dignity as the Mother of God and a partner in the work of our salvation God granted to Mary the grace of the Immaculate Conception. Through the Divine Maternity Mary's sanctity and purity were assured. The Divine Maternity was the measure of Mary's power and glory.

It is only through our purity and holiness that God can accomplish great things in our souls. God in coming to us in Holy Communion purifies us and in purifying us, He makes us holy; in making us holy, He unites us more closely with Himself. It is by means of the Holy Eucharist that our souls are rendered sensitive to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost; Mary's fulness of grace enabled her to be ever faithful to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost. Thus the angel Gabriel declared rightly, "Ave, gratia plena."

It is the law of nature that life manifests itself by motion. The supernatural order is no exception to the law of motion. Life in the supernatural order manifests itself by progress, by a forward movement, the goal is perfection, nothing less. This forward movement is our growth in grace. Mary, Our Mother, stands ready to lead us along the path of perfection. Ever faithful to her mission, Mary will help her children if they ask her. She will share her own humility and love by forming in us those virtues necessary for our growth in the spiritual life. As Mediatrix of all graces she will bring to us the treasures of grace Christ has amassed for us.

God in His wisdom closely associated Mary with the great mystery of redemption. The Incarnation in God's plan of salvation, could not

[13] Eymard, Blessed Peter Julian, *Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament*, (Sentinel Press, NYC, N.Y.) p. 54.

have taken place without her free consent; on Calvary she suffered with her Son for our salvation. God willed to give us Our Redeemer through Mary, thus she became Our Mother. As our earthly mother watches over our growth, protects and helps us in our natural life, so too, Mary, with all the qualities of a mother, desires to make us members of Christ. It is through Mary that the graces of sanctification are distributed to us. God has given Mary perfect knowledge of what concerns the redeemed. Therefore, Mary knows our personal vocations, the perfection we must realize, the glory that we must attain.[14] Everything that we need for our supernatural life: the grace to enter on it; the graces to continue and progress in it; the virtues, the gifts of the Holy Ghost, special helps to resist temptation, all that is needed for our salvation come to us through Mary. "Virgin most powerful, pray for us."

Love desires a life in common with the Beloved. The center of Mary's life was Love, her Divine Son. She shared His life at Bethlehem, at Nazareth she led a poor and hidden life in union with Him, and in Jerusalem she participated in His redemptive suffering. Mary was united to her Son in a silent and hidden manner, separated from the world, with only God as her confidant and witness. Her heart was filled with one desire, to give herself completely to Him. True love thinks, desires, and acts in the person Loved; this was Mary's life, for all her thoughts, words, and actions were centered in Him.

The sacrament of the Eucharist is the sacrament of Love. In this sacramental state He lives as Victim of the supreme act of Love. He, who wishes to live eternally must attain a life of union with God through the Eucharist. Mary is our model. Led by the Holy Ghost she trod the pathways of virtue in perfect unity with the will of God. When we are united to Mary, Christ "grows" in us, for all the graces of our spiritual life come to us through her. She "perfects" Christ in us; that is, the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Love, acts more powerfully in a soul He finds united to Mary and will fashion more quickly that soul into another Christ. In a certain sense Mary is the perfect image of the Redeemer, just as the Word is the perfect image of the Father. Through our love for Mary we shall be led to her Son. She will encourage us to imitate those virtues which will bring the graces of the Eucharist to our souls in abundance.

God makes saints as He pleases. They are made according to His plan and in submission to His will. If you want to be near Christ, you must be big enough to be little. Pray to Mary for this grace.

Malachy Cumiskey, O.P.

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[14] Bernadot, O.P., *op. cit.*, pp. 21-28.

TEMPERED LIFE

WE ARE SO USED TO SAYING that a thing is all blue or all red. It is hard to look at a combination. It is not easy to notice the little red in the blue, or the little blue in the red. This holds for human life, too. Mary saw it all clearly, because she saw with penetration. To her, life was not all action, nor was it all contemplation. It was a combination. It would, of course, be a mistake to divide the combination mathematically. To say that half of Mary's life was action, half contemplation, would be ridiculous. Nature is full of approximations – it has no straight lines; and human life follows the approximations of nature.

St. Thomas has given us an approximation, to appraise Mary's life. "The life of each man seems to be what he delights in most, and what offers the strongest attraction; and in this especially, each one desires to live with his friend."[1] Mary has told us where her delight and strongest attraction lay: "And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior."[2] Her contemplation sprang from a love, *caritas*,[3] of the all beautiful One. The longer she looked at Him, the more strongly she loved Him. The outcome of the whole movement was serene delight.

Mary was well disposed for contemplation. She gives us an indication of the peace of her concupiscible appetite when she says, "How shall this be done, because I know not man?"[4] The balance of her irascible appetite can be seen from what she says in the *Magnificat*.[5] "My soul doth magnify the Lord . . . because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid."[6] Is it not a sign of maturity when humility and greatness of soul live in harmony? If "humility" here does not refer precisely to the virtue, at least it is a sign of the virtue, in Mary's case. Mary's emotions, then were mellow and mature.

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[1] St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, (Ed. Leonina, Rome; Marietti, 1950), II-II, q. 179, a. 1.
[2] Luke, 1:47.
[3] *Summa Theol.*, II-II, 180, 1.
[4] Luke, 1:34.
[5] *Summa Theol.*, II-II, 161, I & 4; q. 129, a. 4.
[6] Luke, 1:46 & 48.

Moreover, she lived well with others. She gave no trouble to Gabriel. She brought great joy to her cousin Elizabeth. Although she was the occasion of anxiety to Joseph when it became evident that she was with child, nevertheless, the happy outcome more than repaid Joseph for his suffering. The Son of God was happy to do her bidding. John gladly took her home for the remaining days of her life. Mary was at peace with men. She was well disposed.

Mary arrived at contemplation after taking four steps[7]: the moral virtues described above, other preliminary acts, the contemplation of divine effects, and the actual contemplation of divine truth. For Mary did not contemplate in an instant. She led up to it gradually, thought by thought. First, she had to gather principles, in several ways. By her keen sense perceptions – for the body that materialized the body of God must have been especially sensitive. By her prayer – for she knew how to pray, "They have no wine."[8]; and she had listened to Gabriel, to Elizabeth, the shepherds, Simeon, the wise men, Joseph, her Son. And by reading what "He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever."[9]

Second, she had to study and draw conclusions from the principles. From Gabriel's principles, she concludes, "Be it done to me according to thy word."[10] From the principles she gathered at Cana, she said to the servants, "Whatever He shall say to you, do ye."[11] Third, before she ascended to the final heights, she had to make the last preparations, by considering the impressions left on creation by God. "He that is mighty, hath done great things to me . . . His mercy is from generation unto generations . . . He has filled the hungry with good things."[12]

But Mary's contemplation was perfect only in the simple intuition of divine truth. Perhaps she gives us the clearest signs of this in her *Magnificat*. "My soul doth magnify the Lord." This was a strange declaration for a humble person to make.

"My soul." This was the object of Mary's study. She too had to understand it the hard way, by analogy. No phantasm pictures the soul perfectly. Parts, matter, the possibility of death must be removed from every consideration of it. At creation Mary's soul was like every other soul, fresh from divinely artistic fingers. But it was different from all the rest, even at that instant, completely radiant with the light of grace, immaculate. Her soul was an image. True, her Son was the natural image of the Father. But after Him, in all creation, Mary was the closest likeness of the divine beauty . . . truly, an image of the Image . . . not

[7] *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 180, a. 4.
[8] John, 2:3.
[9] Luke, 1:55.
[10] Luke, 1:38.
[11] John, 2:5.
[12] Luke, 1:49-53.

a cold, inanimate thing like a mirror, but a close, personal likeness that springs from intimate knowledge and love. The Father looks at the Son, the Son at the Father. They communicate in Love. God looks at Mary, Mary at God. Mary is drawn into the infinite ocean of knowledge and love.

"Doth magnify." Can God be magnified like water or fire? Can anything be added to Him? No. "Magnify" must be taken in a spiritual way. If a friend and the loved one become one, and if the friend is God, then it is the loved one, Mary, who is magnified. She magnifies Him in her thought and love. The all perfect One cannot be made more perfect, but He can expand the mind and heart of those admitted to His intimacy.

"The Lord." This is the only object of true contemplation. This is the best Mary could say. The best part of her, her soul, does the best thing it can do, magnify in thought and love, the best reality, the Lord. How else could she express in words the experience of that contemplative act? God will always remain ineffable. He can be tasted in the intimacy of the soul, but He cannot be constricted by the narrow confinement of words.

"And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior." Mary tells us that her contemplative act was complete. "Soul" and "spirit" here have some difference in meaning. The soul, in this sense, acts chiefly through the practical intellect and the passions. The spirit acts mainly through the speculative intellect and the will. It is in the highest part of Mary's soul that her contemplation is perfected.

"Hath rejoiced." The Latin word *exsultavit* means "leaps for joy;" a kind of contemplative dance. Mary's contemplation flows over into the will, and with a leap and a bound, brings her spirit to a peaceful rest, that spreads out in prolonged delight.

"In God my Savior." True, there was no sin in Mary, but God did save her too. God's thoughtful anticipation holds her in awe: He ran ahead of all human expectations. "I am the Immaculate Conception," Mary told Bernadette; but this could be so, only because "His tender mercies are above all His works."[13]

Mary contemplated God well, but as long as she lived in this life, she never saw the divine essence as the blessed in heaven do. For this, she had to wait until the day of her assumption.

For all this, there has never been anything quite so delightful on earth as Mary's contemplation of God. The very operation was free and easy for her. As an operation is more natural, it is more delightful. Nothing is more congenial to an intelligent nature than contemplation,

[13] Ps. 144:9.

and Mary's intelligence was at the peak of wisdom. Just as we are happy to see those we love, so Mary was glad to contemplate the beauty that held her soul.

On two accounts, then, the delight of her contemplation was far above any other human delight. First, the delight in a spiritual operation is far more powerful than body pleasure. Second, the love of God is a much happier reality than any other love. Her delight had the keenest possible edge and the greatest possible fullness.

Mary's contemplation was something that lasted. It was not a momentary rainbow, but a vision that mellowed with the years. Mary was primarily interested in things that do not change. Her delight, elevated above the senses, had no contrary to expel it. After contemplating, her intellect was not tired out; for the intellect of itself does not grow weary, but goes on forever. As there is no bodily exertion in contemplation, she could continue to contemplate for some time; if not at the peak of the highest act of contemplation, at least in the other acts.

Nor was all of Mary's happiness taken up by contemplation. She found real joy in activity. Not because it was activity, but because it was activity with a purpose, flowing from the moral virtues, and reaching its perfection in activity for others. The influence of her example has been beyond compare.

Guiding all her activity was the mature mastery of her prudence.[14] She knew the flow of exterior occupation from experience and from close attention to everyday events. She was happy in it all, because of her prudence. For prudence and happiness in the active life are coextensive. Their prime source, of course, was her charity.

If we try to measure activity by its effects, then there has hardly been a more active teacher in history than Mary. She left us no writing. She has preferred to teach us in a more personal way – by her lips and example. "Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye" to the alert servants at Cana. "I am the Immaculate Conception" to the ready little peasant at Lourdes. But even these words are little, compared with the most perfect symbol that can draw a man's heart, her example.

After her assumption, Mary's exterior activity ceased. All was caught up in the vision of delight. If she returns to us at Fatima, she does not stop gazing at God. There is no distinguishing now her active contemplative life. It is all one.

Mary was happily aware that contemplation is more powerful than activity. It called for the best that was in her: it was more lasting, more delightful, needed fewer things, was desirable for itself, quiet, concerned with God, more congenial to her nature. Nevertheless, when activity was

[14] *Summa Theol.*, II-II, p. 181, a. 2.

needed, "the mother of Jesus was there"[15]—but moderately engaged in such a way that the delight of her contemplation did not flow away.

She sought contemplation, because it meant more merit. Its root was love of God – something more meritorious than love of her neighbor.[16] She went with haste to see Elizabeth, because her love of God flowed over to her cousin. Nor did her visit lessen her appreciation for contemplation. Any exterior labor merely increased her accidental reward. Her greatest sacrifice was to offer her own soul, one with her Son's, to God, then the souls of others. She gained more merit by applying her own soul and others' souls to contemplation than to action.

Engaged in exterior works, Mary had to cease contemplating for a while.[17] For it is not humanly possible to contemplate and work at the same time. Yet in her very work, she was busy composing her emotions to greater order and serenity, so that she would be better prepared for contemplation. All her activity disposed her for contemplation.

The test of Mary's life was the passion of her Son. It was the test of her active and contemplative life. It was then that her moral virtues were quickened. "In your patience you will possess your souls."[18] Mary's sorrow was the sorrow of her Son – one sorrow. The patience that mastered it prepared her emotions for the contemplation of His resurrection.

Then, too, her contemplation was tested. It was not easy to see the all-powerful One in the Man who took such punishment. It was not easy to see pure beauty in the ugly form on the cross. But she saw through it all. Mary passed the test. She still magnified the Lord.

Leo Burdett, O.P.

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[15] John, 2:1.
[16] *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 182, a. 2.
[17] *Ibid.*, a. 3.
[18] Luke, 21:19.

SAINT JOSEPH IN THE DOMINICAN TRADITION

THE WAYS OF GOD are not the ways of men. When the Incarnation was decreed from all eternity, two creatures were destined to be intimately connected with this sacred mystery – Mary, the Mother of God, and her espoused husband, Joseph. Although many reasons can be stated for the necessity of Joseph in the Divine Plan, perhaps the principal one is his predestined role as protector and provider for Mary and her Son. With Mary he was to share the tremendous responsibility, yet immeasurable privilege, of rearing the Son of God.

The names of Joseph and Mary are so intimately linked together that it would seem an oversight if at least one article on St. Joseph were not included in this Marian Year issue. We hail both of them in the Divine Praises at Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Again we address them in the prayer *A cunctis.* In fact, whenever we speak of the Holy Family, we think of all three members – Jesus, Mary and Joseph. So too, when reading a series of articles on the Mother of God, it would seem rather strange if we found no mention made of her most chaste spouse.

Today most theologians maintain that St. Joseph ranks next to the Blessed Virgin in heaven. The foundation for this assertion is contained in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas. The Angelic Doctor propounds the thesis that when a person is predestined by God for some special mission, he endows that person with the graces and helps necessary for its completion.[1] This grace is in proportion to the dignity of the office involved. In St. Joseph's case, the special mission was his integral relation to the mystery of the Redemption. His dignity, therefore, is next to that of the Immaculate Virgin. It was his honor to watch over and direct the early years of the Incarnate Word, the Source of Sanctity. A great degree of holiness was expected and demanded of him who was to represent God the Father in the earthly reflection of the Trinity, the Holy Family.

[1] St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae,* III, q. 27, a. 4.

Twenty centuries have elapsed since the death of St. Joseph. Today devotion to him is universal, and, with the exception of that given to the Blessed Virgin, probably the most popular veneration given to any of God's saints. Yet, paradoxically, for almost ten centuries Joseph was among the least known men of the western world.

Many are the reasons for this apparent neglect of so great a saint during the early days of the Church. Perhaps the most important reason arises from the struggles with heresy which faced the infant Church. Fundamental doctrines were being attacked, and many of these centered upon the virginity of Our Lady. For this reason St. Joseph slipped into the background and became merely an incidental character in the story of Christ's infancy. To ward off any possible slurs upon the virginal beauty of the Mother of God, popular notions depicted St. Joseph as an elderly man. Unfortunately, this concept of St. Joseph as an aged patriarch has persisted to a certain degree even to the present day.

Devotion to St. Joseph gradually increased as the meditations of holy souls on the Gospel account of the Incarnation and birth of Christ led to a deeper realization of St. Joseph's true place in the designs of Providence. However, it was not until the twelfth century that the cult honoring the spouse of the Blessed Virgin really began to flourish. The religious orders took the lead in promoting devotion to the foster-father of Christ. Books were written about his prerogatives, and sermons were preached extolling his virtues. Among the greatest proponents of this cult was the Order of Preachers.[2]

The Order of St. Dominic has always, from its very inception, been a champion of Marian devotion. It follows, then, that St. Joseph, the most chaste spouse of Mary, should be included in the writings of eminent Dominican theologians. The cult of St. Joseph owes great impetus to the labors of these men; indeed, without the solid teaching of the early Friars Preachers the devotion could hardly have grown and flourished as it did.[3]

The two outstanding writers of the Dominican Order are St. Albert the Great and St. Thomas Aquinas. True sons of Dominic, their love of Mary is evidenced in all their theological works. However, any of their considerations of Mary inevitably leads to a discussion of the third member of the Holy Family, St. Joseph. St. Albert treats of the relation of St. Joseph to the Son of God in his *Mariale.* In his general description of the fatherhood of Joseph, he considers the prefiguration of St. Joseph in the Old Testament.

[2] Cf. Lepicier, O.S.M., A.M., *Go to Joseph,* (New York: Benziger Bros., 1924), pp. 30-33. He discusses the contributions of the Servites, Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites, and the Carthusians in fostering devotion to St. Joseph.

[3] "St. Joseph could never have received the full honors of the liturgy had not his dignity been solidly established by the Dominican theologians of the Church." Filas, S.J., F.L., *Th Man Nearest to Christ,* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1944), 152.

> It was not fitting that he should be prefigured by anyone who was a husband by carnal relationship since through his marriage contract he entered upon a more holy marriage without any fleshly contact. As a virginal husband he protected his virginal wife, and by rendering due ministry to both Mother and Son, he was joined to them inseparably by paternal affection. The meaning of his name signifies *increase* . . . [most fitting for him who shared,] as it were, a divine fatherhood.[4]

In the *Commentary on the Gospel of St. Matthew,* the unparalleled words of Albert extol Joseph's virginity:

> His care makes him like a father; his espousals make him a husband; his preservation of chastity makes him the guide of the virginity of his wife.[5]

Although St. Albert's exposition of the virtues and merits of St. Joseph ranks among the most notable of the early writings, it is to his pupil, St. Thomas Aquinas, that the modern theologians must turn for a full explanation of the principles underlying St. Joseph's fatherhood of Christ. To Aquinas, the reason for Joseph's primacy arises from the real relationship which existed between him and the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, a relationship springing from his virginal marriage to the Mother of God.

> Marriage or wedlock is said to be true by reason of its attaining its perfection. Now perfection of anything is twofold; first, and second. The first perfection of a thing consists in its very form, from which it receives its species; while the second perfection of a thing consists in its operation, by which in some way a thing attains its end. Now the form of matrimony consists in a certain inseparable union of souls by which husband and wife are pledged by a bond of mutual affection that cannot be sundered. And the end of matrimony is the begetting and upbringing of children: the first of which is attained by conjugal intercourse; the second by the other duties of husband and wife, by which they help one another in rearing their offspring.
>
> Thus we may say, as to the first perfection that the marriage of the Virgin Mother of God and Joseph was absolutely true: because both consented to the nuptial bond, but not expressly to the bond of the flesh, save on the condition that it was pleasing to God. For this reason the angel calls Mary the wife of Joseph. . . .
>
> But as to the second perfection which is attained by the marriage act, if this be referred to carnal intercourse, by which children are begotten; thus this marriage was not consummated. . . . Nevertheless, this marriage had the second perfection, as to upbringing of the child.[6]

It is clear from this that St. Thomas certainly defends the true marital union of Joseph and Mary. It was indeed virginal marriage, but nonetheless binding and valid. Next to her Divine Son, Mary's love and care

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[4] "Nec congruebat eum figurari per aliquem qui maritus per carnalem copulam exstiterit, cum ipse sine carnali copula sanctius conjugium per pactionem conjugalem traxit, et conjux virgo conjugem virginem custodivit, et debitum ministerium reddendo et matri et Filio, paterno affectu inseparabiliter conjunctus fuit. Proprietas nominis et significatio quae *incrementum* sonat . . . divina ut putabatur, paternitate." Albert the Great, *Mariale, sive 230 Quest. super ev. Missus Est,* Q. 23, *Opera Omnia,* ed. Borgnet, Paris, Vivès, 1890, XXXVII, 50.

[5] "Cura quidem est ut pater, sponsione vir, et custodia castitatis: dux virginitatis conjugis." *Ibid* XX, 43.

[6] St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae,* (English Dominicans' transl., New York: Benziger, 1947), III, q. 29, a. 2.

were directed to her husband. Mary lived with Joseph for at least twenty years, and we may be sure that the graces dispensed by her Son through her to St. Joseph were innumerable and far greater than those received by any other saint.

Among the early members of the family of Dominic is one Bartholomew of Trent. He composed a biography of St. Joseph which is contained in his *Epilogus Vitae Sanctorum.*[7] Unfortunately, only fragments of this work are now extant; the major portion of this life of St. Joseph comes to us through lengthy quotations contained in Trombelli's *Vita e culto di S. Giuseppe,* which was published at Bologna in 1767.

No less in his devotion to St. Joseph was the famous Dominican preacher of the fourteenth century, St. Vincent Ferrer. Throughout his sermons the name of Joseph is frequently mentioned, and Vincent fervently urges his listeners to imitate the virtues of the humble carpenter of Nazareth.

In his *Sermon on the Vigil of Christmas* St. Vincent states that the Incarnation was manifested to Joseph in three ways. First of all, Vincent says that Joseph knew of the great happening because the physical condition of Our Blessed Mother contradicted her faultless life which he knew so well. Secondly, an angel was sent by God to tell Joseph of the wondrous event that would soon take place. A further indication of the divine cause of Mary's pregnancy was apparent from the fact that she was spared the physical pain and discomfort connected with childbearing.

In all his sermons on the Nativity and early years of Our Lord, Vincent inserts imaginary conversations between the members of the Holy Family. For example, his discussion of the threefold manifestation of the Incarnation to St. Joseph is brought to a conclusion with the following words supposedly addressed by Joseph to Our Lady:

> O blessed one, why did you not tell me for I would have believed you. How sweetly she consoled him by rejoicing with him that he was the spouse and companion of the Mother of God and guardian of His Son. O blessed family! How reverently they both adored God incarnate in the womb of the virgin.[8]

Vincent's style would perhaps seem too dulcet to modern ears, accustomed as they are to the presentation of religious truth in tones less emotionally colored. Nevertheless, his sermons on St. Joseph are significant because they drew attention to the eminent prerogatives of the virginal father of Christ at a time when devotion to St. Joseph was still far from widespread.

[7] Cf. Quetif-Echard, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum Recensiti,* (Paris: Ballard et Simart, 1729), I, 110.

[8] "O benedicta, quare non dixistis mihi, quia ego credidissem vobis. Et quam dulciter ipsa illum consolabatur congratulando, quod esset sponsus et socius matris filii Dei et ejus nutritius. O benedicta societas. Item quam reverenter uterque Deum adorabat in utero virginis incarnatum." St. Vincent Ferrer, *Festivale,* in *Opera,* (Augsburg: Joannes Strötter, 1729), "In vigilia Nativitatis Christi, Sermo II," 27.

During the fifteenth century, Confraternities of St. Joseph were erected side by side with those of the Rosary in the churches of the Dominican Order. Furthermore, in the annals of the General Chapter of 1508, the provinces of the Order were instructed to celebrate yearly a feast dedicated to Saint Joseph.[9] This is among the first of such tributes in the Church. Even today we find a vestige of the original Dominican devotion to St. Joseph in the prayer of the Mass for March 19 which is taken from the Dominican Missal of 1552.

Of all the medieval Dominican writings on St. Joseph, probably none are more important yet less known than those of Isidore de Isolani. Friar Isidore was born in Milan about 1477 and died there in 1528. His was the first attempt to collect and collate all available information and theological teaching on the life and prerogatives of St. Joseph. He modeled his work upon the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas. In this book lies Isidore's title to fame. Pope Benedict XIV stated that along with the sermons of Gerson, the book of Isidore de Isolani constitutes a primary source for any author who wishes to write about St. Joseph.

The first publication of Isidore's treatise was made at Padua in 1522. It was offered under the imposing title, *Summa in quattuor partes divisa de donis S. Joseph sponsi beatissimae virginis Mariae, ac patris putativi Christi docet, disputat, meditatur, enarrat Isidorus de Isolanis.* There have been two subsequent editions. The last edition, published at Rome in 1887, includes a Mass and Office for the feast of St. Joseph composed by Isidore at the command of his Master General, Cajetan de Vio.

This *Summa,* as the title indicates, is divided into four parts, the first of which deals with the early life of the Saint before his marriage; the second section treats of the marriage itself and questions which arise from the contract. The third division discusses the blessings of the Old and New Testaments that have been or will be accomplished in St. Joseph. Finally Isidore speaks of the eternal honor and glory of St. Joseph in heaven.

Perhaps the most astounding of Isidore's words are those which seem to prophesy concerning the future of Mary's spouse:

> For the Holy Spirit will not rest from inciting the hearts of the faithful until the entire kingdom of the Church Militant will heap new honors on godly Joseph and will erect monasteries, churches, and altars in his honor. . . . For the honor of His name, God has chosen St. Joseph as head and special patron of the kingdom of the Church Militant. Before the Day of Judgment it must happen that all peoples know, honor, and adore the name of the Lord and the great gifts of God which He Himself has placed in St. Joseph and which He has left almost in obscurity throughout a long period. . . . For this cause the name of St. Joseph will overflow with the gifts of all goods of the earth. Temples will be built in his honor; the people will celebrate feasts and offer vows to him, and he must fulfill these. The Lord will open the ears of the understanding, and great men will search out the inner gifts

[9] *Acta Capitulorum Generalium O.P.,* IV, 85–IX in *Monumenta Ordinis Pradicatorum Historica.*

> of God that are hidden in St. Joseph, and they will find an exceedingly precious treasure such as was never found in the Fathers of the Old Testament. . . . The people who call on St. Joseph shall be repaid by him with interest from heaven while he himself in the majesty of his glory partakes of no mortal interest. His name shall be listed in the calendars of the saints, and no longer at the end but at the beginning. Then shall there be celebrated a supreme and venerable feast for him. At the inspiration of the Holy Spirit the vicar of Christ on earth will command that the feast of the adoptive father of Christ, the spouse of the Queen of Heaven, of this exceedingly holy man, will be celebrated in all parts of the kingdom of the Church Militant. Thus, he who is over all in heaven will no longer be disregarded on earth.[10]

These words were written by Isidore in 1522. Before a century had passed, this prophecy was already partially fulfilled. On May 8, 1621, Pope Gregory XV decreed that the feast of St. Joseph be extended to the universal Church and celebrated with the rank of a double.

In the same book Isidore considers the fatherly relation of St. Joseph to Our Lord.

> Joseph acted in the stead of the Heavenly Father. . . . It is men's custom that fathers have authority to name their sons. Jesus was the Son of God the Father. Thus, St. Joseph took the place of the Heavenly Father in this dignity. When kings' sons are baptized, who, I pray, reads out the name of the son to be baptized, in the stead of the regal parents? Is it not another king or a legate of the king, or some other eminent personage?[11]

Later Isidore imagines Joseph to be talking to Jesus while he carried the Infant in his arms. He phrases it in this way:

> How often did he lovingly carry the Child in his arms! And when the Child began to lisp and to show outwardly that He understood, how often would Joseph say: "What do You want, my Son? Oh, immortal God tell me, order, command! You wish that they consider me Your father, but I only desire, and glory in it, to be Your servant. Who would not love You, You so exceedingly beautiful, so wise and strong and powerful and so loving? For You are truly God, the wisdom of the Father, the splendor of His glory, the salvation of mankind. I adore You, my Son, I love You, I wish to be loved by You. Accept my service which I would fain give You and Your holy mother. Where I, weak and mortal man, would fail, be You my help. O sweet consolation, o fountain of love, my soul is melting by the sweetness of Your love." To such words of intense love the Child's sweet voice would answer, His face lighting up with joy. There is, then, no reason to doubt that Joseph must have loved the Child with an indescribable love. Ask one who loves the Lord Jesus Christ, ask one who is longing for Him. He will answer: All this is clearer than daylight; and to see it no proofs are needed, only the heart of a lover.[12]

From these excerpts it should be quite clear that Isidore de Isolani had perfect confidence and unshakable belief in the eminence and prestige of St. Joseph. He uttered his words strongly and without any misgivings. His was an almost hallowed creed in the virtues and glories of Joseph.

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[10] Isidore de Isolani, *Summa de donis Sancti Ioseph*, (Rome: Polyglot Press, 1887), p. III, c. 6, 8. As quoted in Filas, S.J., F.L., *op. cit.* pp. 120-121.

[11] *Ibid.*, as quoted by Filas, S.J., F.L., *Joseph and Jesus* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1952), 81.

[12] *Ibid.*, as quoted by Mueller, S.J., Joseph, *The Fatherhood of St. Joseph*, (St. Louis: Herder, 1952), 162-163.

Living at the time he did, it seems amazing that he could give voice to such breath-taking statements.

Although Isidore is the most outspoken of the Friars Preachers on this subject, he is by no means the last Dominican to contribute to the spread of St. Joseph's cult. In the early eighteenth century lived the theologian Vincent Louis Cardinal Gotti, O.P., who presents an argument for the true paternity of St. Joseph in his book *La versa Chiesa di Christo.*[13] Contemporaneous with Gotti was the Dominican pope, Benedict XIII, of the noble Orsini family, who commanded that the name of Joseph be inserted in the Litany of the Saints. This practice had already been observed by the Order of Preachers for almost two hundred years. In 1551, the Friars had petitioned Pope Julius III for permission to place the invocation to the virginal spouse of Mary in the litanies approved for their own use.

Thus we may see that the cult of St. Joseph has ever been fostered in the Dominican Order. In the hearts of its members there has always been place for the love of Mary's husband. This love has been reciprocal —the Order has flourished, and its devotion to Joseph has never faltered. Since the General Chapter at Avila in 1895, in every house of the Order an antiphon is sung after the main meal of the day and a versicle and prayer recited in honor of the holy Patriarch.[14] This devotion has not been in vain, for Joseph has not failed those who have been faithful to him. His is an abiding position of supplication at the feet of his Beloved Son with Whom he has been for two thousand years and with Whom he will remain for all eternity. *Ite ad Joseph*—Go to Joseph—for as we read in the book of Ecclesiasticus, "A faithful friend is a strong defense; and he that hath found him, hath found a treasure. Nothing can be compared to a faithful friend."[15]

Joseph Haddad, O.P.

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[13] The full title for Gotti's work, as it is given in Quetif-Echard, *op. cit.*, II, 814, is as follows: *La vera Chiesa di Cristo dimostrata da' segni, e da' dogmi, contra i due libri di Giacomo Picenino intitolati: Apologia per i riformtori, e per la religione riformata, e Trionfo della vera religione. Opera del padre F. Vincenzo Lodovico Gotti dell' ordine de' Predicatori, maestro e publice lettore di controversie nella universita di Bologna,* (Bologna: Pisarri, 1719).

[14] *Acta Capituli Generalis O.P., Avila, 1895,* (Rome: 1895), pp. 93-94.

[15] Ecclus. 6:14-15.

THE HOLY NAME OF MARY

THE YEAR WAS 1663. The dreaded Turks were again on the march. A mighty horde, two hundred thousand strong, descended upon Vienna determined to wipe out this Christian city. By mid-July the city walls were in sight of the oncoming army, a force so vast that the Emperor Leopold with many of his nobles fled the city. Sixty thousand defenders made hopeless preparations to meet the attackers. Meanwhile, Pope Innocent XI appealed to all the princes of Christendom, asking their assistance against this perilous threat to Christianity. On August 14, the Pope ordered special prayers to be said in Rome, imploring the intercession of Our Lady.

On the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, John Sobieski, King of Poland, started a march at the head of a gallant band of Poles, determined to defend the cause of Catholicism against the Turks. Sobieski was joined by forces from Germany. With a combined army of seventy-seven thousand, he descended on a Vienna nearly overcome by the Turkish siege. Leading the onslaught, Sobieski cried, "Not to us, not to us, O Lord of hosts, but to Thy name give glory." God and His Mother heard the prayers of Christendom, the prayers of Pope Innocent and John Sobieski. The Turks were annihilated; Christianity and Vienna were saved.

In thanksgiving to the Mother of God, Pope Innocent XI instituted the Feast of the Most Holy Name of Mary to be celebrated throughout the Universal Church on the Sunday within the octave of the Feast of Mary's Nativity. Every year on this Feast the liturgy recalls the help which has been obtained, which will continue to be obtained, by imploring the assistance of Mary. It seems, then, that some benefit would be derived from an examination of the holy name of Mary, the praises of which are so frequently sung by the Church throughout the liturgical year.

The name *Mary,* in Hebrew *Miryam,* was in widespread use in Palestine at the time of Christ. Numerous hypotheses have been suggested re-

garding its original meaning, but modern Scripture scholars[1] consider these theories uncertain and unsatisfying. The name is found only once in the Old Testament; the sister of Moses was called Mary. It is possible that Mary is of Egyptian origin, in which cases it would mean "Beloved of Yahweh." Some philologists have tried to base the etymology of this name on the Hebrew. They offer such meanings as "sea of bitterness," and "myrrh of the sea." One of the most widespread interpretations of the name, attributed to St. Jerome, is "Star of the Sea." But most modern Scripture scholars maintain that St. Jerome knew Hebrew too well to interpret the name of Mary as *Stella Maris.* They believe that he probably translated the name as *Stilla Maris,* which in time was changed by poetic copyists.

The most common opinion, however, is that the name *Miryam* was interpreted by the Jews of Palestine as *Lady* or *Mistress,* because of its similarity with the Aramaic *Mara,* meaning *Master* or Lord. Thus, true equivalents of the name would be *Domina* in Latin, *Madonna* in Italian, *Notre-Dame* in French, and in English, *Our Lady.*

Owing to the uncertainty of the conclusions and the lack of unanimity among scholars, the search for the precise meaning of the name Mary has thus far proved to be quite unsatisfying. Yet we are faced with the fact that the Church did institute a feast in honor of this name. In the Office and Mass of the Feast of the Most Holy Name of Mary, the Church uses many of the traditional interpretations given to the name. One has only to look at the second lessons of this feast, where St. Bernard expounds at length on the interpretation "Star of the Sea." In the light of modern philological study, it would be unscientific to hold that any one of these titles expresses the original meaning of the name of Mary.

Yet it is most fitting to examine these titles bestowed upon the Blessed Virgin, comparing their meaning with what is known about her from theology. Such a study leads to the conclusion that every one of these titles is fitting to Mary because of its connection with the truths of faith; that they are by no means empty phrases, but expressions signifying profound truths of dogma.

Such is the aim of this paper. The problem now is to select those titles most aptly interpreted, and to find a traditional authority upon which to base these interpretations. The problem is easily solved by turning to St. Thomas Aquinas, to his *Exposition on the Angelic Salutation,*[2] wherein he treats of three of Mary's titles.

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[1] G. Riccitti, *The Life of Christ* (Trans. by A. Zizzamia, Milwaukee: Bruce, 1947), p. 224; F. Prat, S.J., *Jesus Christ* (Vol. I, Trans. by J. Heenan, S.J., Milwaukee: Bruce, 1950), pp. 42-43; M.-J. Lagrange, O.P., *The Gospel of Jesus Christ* (Vol. I, Trans. by English Dominicans, Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1938), p. 17.

[2] St. Thomas, *Expositio Salutationis Angelicae* (ed. Rossi, C.M., Piacenza: Collegio Alberoni, 1931), pp. 40. The rest of this paper is taken substantially from this source.

The precise expression of the *Summa* is not to be looked for in this work. This, and other similar expositions, are not theological treatises but rather sermons. For this reason, an examination of this work provides an opportunity to watch the Angelic Doctor mold the truths of faith into a beautiful sermon, as well as providing a traditional framework for interpreting the name of Mary.

St. Thomas begins his exposition by saying that the Angelic Salutation is composed of three parts. The first is that of the Angel Gabriel where he says, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women." Elizabeth provides the second part, saying, "Blessed is the fruit of thy womb." The Church supplies the third, "Hail, *Mary.*" St. Thomas says that it is fitting for the Church to add the name Mary, for according to its interpretation this agrees with the words used by the angel. He points this out in his exposition.

Throughout history whenever angels appeared to man it was considered a remarkable sign; and man, realizing his lower position, showed reverence to the angels. The Patriarch Abraham was praised for the hospitality and reverence he showed to his angelic visitors. St. Thomas gives three reasons why it was proper for man to consider the angels superior. The angels, having a spiritual nature, are of a higher order than men who have a corruptible nature. It was not appropriate for a spiritual and incorruptible creature to revere a corruptible one such as man.

Secondly, the angels assisting, at the Divine Throne, belong to God's household. Man, a stranger to God through sin, honor these members of God's household who were nearer the King.

Finally, the angels have a pre-eminence because of their fullness of splendour of divine grace. For the angels participate in the highest plenitude in the very *light* of divine grace. Men, on the other hand, participating in this same light of grace, by reason of their bodies, and wounded by original sin, obscure the splendour of this light.

All this was changed when the Angel Gabriel appeared to Our Blessed Mother. Then occurred what had never been heard of before; an angel showed deference to a human being: Gabriel reverently says, "Hail, full of grace." Fra Angelico pictures this momentous occasion in history by having Gabriel genuflect as he speaks to Mary. The queen receives homage from the royal messenger. For such an act on the part of one having angelic stature to be fitting, Mary must certainly be of a higher order than the angels. Taking the three reasons he has given for the superiority of angelic nature over human nature, St. Thomas next shows that Our Blessed Mother exceeds the angels in precisely these three spheres. And in each sphere he shows the propriety of a particular title of Mary.

Reversing the order of the reasons he has previously given, the Angelic Doctor says that Mary has a more abundant fullness of grace than any angel. Indeed, the Angel addressed her by saying, "Hail, full of grace," which is as if he had said, I show reverence to you, therefore, because you excel me in the plenitude of grace.

The Blessed Virgin's fullness of grace is manifested in a threefold manner. The first is with respect to her soul which contained the plenitude of grace. God's grace is given for two purposes: to perform good works and to avoid evil. Having the most perfect grace, the Blessed Virgin avoided sin more than any other, save Christ. She was at the same time the personification of all virtue. Other saints exemplify special virtues: the mercy of St. Nicholas, the poverty of St. Francis. But in no other saint, indeed not in all the saints combined, is found the model of virtue which is Mary.

Secondly, Mary's soul was so full of grace that it overflowed into her flesh. This overflowing of grace into her flesh was manifested, St. Thomas says, by her conceiving the Son of God. He quotes Hugh of St. Victor as saying that the love of the Holy Spirit burned with such singularity in her heart, He worked the wonder in her flesh that there was born of her the God-man. "For that which is begotten in her is of the Holy Spirit."[3]

The third manifestation of Mary's plentiude of grace, according to St. Thomas, is the overflowing of this grace into all men. That a person have grace sufficient to save his soul is something excellent. It is even more excellent to have grace in such amount to save many souls. But to have enough grace for the salvation of all men in the world, this is the greatest, and this is found in Christ and the Blessed Virgin.

Because her fullness of grace is so eminent, overflowing into all men, Our Blessed Mother is fittingly called Mary, which can be interpreted *Illuminatrix*. Thus she is the illuminatrix; she is likened to the sun and the moon. The Angelic Doctor links this title, used by St. Isidore, with Mary's role as mediatrix of all graces.

St. Thomas then proceeds to show that Mary occupies a higher position in God's household than the angels, who assist at the Divine Throne. Knowing this, the Angel Gabriel, after proclaiming her fullness of grace, continued, "the Lord is with Thee." *Dominus tecum.* It was as if Gabriel had said, you are closer to God than I am, for the Lord is with thee, therefore, I show reverence to you.

When Gabriel told Mary that the Lord was with her, he had reference to two things: the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in her beautiful soul, and her predestination to be the Mother of God. It was this privilege of

[3] Matt. 1:20.

Divine Motherhood that made Mary the holiest of creatures. Because she is the Mother of Our Lord, she is *Our Lady.* Thus, the name of Mary is validly interpreted as meaning *Lady* or *Queen.*

Mary is Queen of the heavenly court, Queen both of angels and men. The angels are the ministers of the heavenly court, sent to earth carrying God's messages. Some angels are responsible for individual countries, as the Book of Daniel mentions. The Lord sent an angel to strike Jerusalem. An angel was also sent to shut the mouths of the lions so they could not harm Daniel when he was cast into their den. And there is the appearance of the Angel Gabriel, bearing God's message to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Blessed Virgin is truly called *Illuminatrix* and *Our Lady.* But St. Thomas considers a third interpretation of the name of Mary; her beautiful title, *Star of the Sea.* It has been shown that, because of his intimate knowledge of Hebrew, modern exegetes are of the opinion that St. Jerome never used the Latin phrase *Stella Maris* for the Hebrew *Miryam.* Be that as it may, this is a traditional title of the Blessed Virgin, passed down through the writings of the Fathers and the Liturgy. Again St. Thomas provides the solid argument showing why, considering Mary's prerogatives, such a title is fitting.

Up to this point St. Thomas has shown that Mary exceeds the angels both in fullness of grace and in proximity to God. There is a third reason given for the superiority of angels over men: a spiritual nature is of a higher dignity than a corruptible nature. This third reason for angelic superiority presents a different type of problem. It has been shown that there were no intrinsic reasons why Mary could not be superior to the angels in grace and in her nearness to God, although this was an exception to the general rule. But in the order of nature it would seem that Mary could never be superior to angelic nature.

It must be borne in mind that St. Thomas, in dealing with this particular problem, does so as a preacher and not formally as a theologian. For this reason, when he comes to this third problem in his *Exposition,* he merely says that the Blessed Virgin excels the angels in respect to purity. She herself was most pure, and she procured the riches of purity for others. Her purity, then, would place her in a higher order of spirituality than the angels. In addition, her purity was of such a superior nature that it freed her from the corruption of the body at death. This section of the Angelic Doctor's sermon should be examined in some detail.

St. Thomas says that the Blessed Virgin was most pure in that she did not incur any sin. In addition to this, she was free from certain penalties which were the result of sin. Because of original sin God said to Eve, "In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children." Our Blessed Mother, on the

other hand, was immune from this curse, and she brought forth the Saviour with joy. St. Thomas applies the words of Isaias to her, "She shall bud forth and blossom, and shall rejoice with joy and praise."[4]

Mary was also immune from the curse of bodily corruption at death. "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." But Mary ascended into Heaven, soul and glorious body united. In this regard, St. Thomas quotes Psalm 131, "Arise, O Lord, into thy resting place: thou and the ark which thou hast sanctified."

It was fitting that this sinless Virgin should be addressed as "blessed among women," for she was about to receive from God that blessing which He had reserved for her from the beginning—the privilege of being the Mother of the Saviour, the Mother of God. This Saviour would soon open the Gates of Paradise through His Passion. Mary would be with Him there on Calvary in her role as co-redemptrix. The Holy Virgin, most pure herself in her freedom from sin and its effects, also made it possible for men to become pure. Thus, her purity was more excellent than that of the angels.

She is, therefore, fittingly called Mary, which is interpreted *Stella Maris,* the Star of the Sea. As the star of the sea directs navigators to their port, so Mary directs Christians to glory. St. Bernard expresses this thought in his homily on the words of St. Luke. "She is rightly likened to a star; for as a star sends forth its rays without being dimmed, so the Virgin brought forth her Son without receiving any injury. . . . This is the noble star risen out of Jacob, whose rays illumine the entire universe . . . giving warmth to souls rather than to bodies, fostering virtue, destroying vice . . . shining by her merits, and by her example giving us light."[5]

St. Thomas concludes his sermon by showing how this "blessed among women" through the blessed fruit of her womb gives to men what Eve sought in the forbidden fruit of Eden. Eve was told by the Prince of Liars that the forbidden fruit would make them as gods, knowing good and evil. They became instead unlike God by sinning. But through Christ, the fruit of Mary's womb, we are conjoined in God, and united to Him.

In the fruit of the garden Eve sought for forbidden delight, but all she received was the pain which the shame of her nudity brought her. But in the fruit of Mary we find, not shame or pain, but sweetness and salvation. "He that eats my flesh and drinks my blood has life everlasting."[6]

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[4] Isa. 35:2.

[5] "Ipsa namque aptissime sideri comparatur; quia, sicut sine sui corruptione sidus suum emittit radium, sic absque sui laesione virgo parturit filium . . . Ipsa est igitur nobilis illa stella ex Jocob orta, cujus radius universum orbem illuminat . . . calefaciens mentes quam corpora, fovet virtutes, excoquit vitia . . . micans meritis, illustrans exemplis." (St. Bernard, *P.L.,* CLXXXIII, 743.)

[6] John 6:55.

Finally, the fruit brought forth by Mary was far more beautiful than that which attracted Eve, for Christ is the splendor of the glory of the Father.

In his *Exposition on the Angelic Salutation* the Angelic Doctor has shown why Mary is the Illuminatrix, Our Lady, and the Star of the Sea. By calling on her most holy name, Vienna and all Christendom were saved. St. Bernard has rightly said, "In peril, in anguish, in doubt, think of Mary. Let her name be ever on thy lips."[7]

Bartholomew Ryan, O.P.

[7] "In periculis, in angustiis, in rebus dubiis, Mariam cogita, Mariam invoca. Non recedat ab ore . . ." (St. Bernard, *Loc. cit.*)

MARY AND MUSIC

WE ARE CONSTANTLY REMINDED by the Church that the Blessed Virgin Mary is our heavenly Mother who intercedes for us before God. Moreover, we are urged to model our lives after hers and that of her Son. The artistic sphere, especially in our time, needs the guidance and example of the Virgin Mother of God. Pope Pius XII in a recent address to a group of Catholic artists, urged them to invoke Mary under the title of Queen of the Arts.[1]

In the past, order was preserved in the arts. That is, the artist's imitation of a human action was ordered toward arousing and quieting the emotions of the observer, so as to leave his intellect satisfied with the possession of truth. Yet, beginning with the nineteenth century when so many once Christian men lost sight of their final end or denied it, and as a consequence substituted an inferior end, the artist also lost sight of the object of his art. What he had left was merely a well developed technique. In his works were reflected his disgust, despair, and lack of spirit. Again, the viewer, the reader, the listener, all those who received the fruits of the artist's endeavors, were also led to a sense of disorder; a condition from which the artist could not rise, and at times even cultivated.

How is art to rise again? The answer to this question is Mary, because,

> since 'the culture of despair' results from the cultivation of immoral and unintelligible art, the fundamental artistic answer to the modern dilemma is to have art arise 'from the new hope of salvation,' in which the Blessed Mother plays the tremendous role of mediatrix of all graces.[2]

I have not said that all modern art is disordered. Through the God-centered view of Roualt the painter, or Stravinsky the composer, and the many following him, flows the spring of infinite love. Through the man-made ugliness that they portray, a triumphant flame of goodness

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[1] Atti e discorsi di Pio XII, Rome, Instituto Missionario, Pia Societa S. Paolo. Sept. 5, 1950, XII, pp. 208-211.

[2] Christopher M. Lehner, O.P., "The Philosophy of Imitative Art," (unpublished manuscript, Providence College, Providence, Rhode Island), p. 52.

shines, illuminating the disordered darkness of reality and producing a startling pattern in that world of reality which it reveals. In a certain sense this goodness is personified in Our Blessed Mother, the brightness of eternal light. For she is a human being by whom the mediocrities of the commercial craftsmen who deal in religious art and music and the blasphemies of the secular artist are exposed in their essential ugliness and emptiness. Yet, she is an inspiration for the artist willing to accept her.

In his *Mariale,* St. Albert asks whether Mary knew music. He answers that provision was made for singers and the use of song in the old law as well as the new. The worship of God demanded it. The science of music pertains to the worship of God, because song is rightly known through music. And thus, he concludes, Mary knew music.[3]

He then asks whether Mary was a musician. His answer is yes: *"in summo."*[4] We have but to think of the *Magnificat* which she sang so many years ago and recall the manifold attempts of men like Palestrina and Bach to set it to music, to realize that she is a great poet and musician.

Again, in a metaphorical sense, her *fiat mihi* was another of Mary's songs. It was an effort to re-establish the harmony that once existed between God and man. Her whole life was given to this work. Nor did it cease after her assumption into heaven, for, "Paradisi portae per te nobis apertae sunt."[5]

Since music ". . . is a direct image, a copy of character, is the express image, and reflexion of moral character . . ." and ". . . imitates human passion as a principle of human speech,"[6] our Blessed Mother can be a model and a guide for the musician. By the example of her life, Mary is a guide cautioning both the aspirant and the mature musician. For, the tendency to excess to which the artist is prone in the moral and artistic spheres needs the hand of caution. As a model of all the moral virtues, she evidences a perfect proportion in the moral sphere; a proportion for which the composer and performer should strive in the artistic sphere, in their use of consonant and dissonant sounds.

If written properly, "music like tragedy purifies the passions by developing them within the limits and in the order of beauty, harmonizing them with the intelligence, in a harmony which fallen nature experiences nowhere else."[7] Some of our so-called romantic music is spoiled by an excess or disorder. Practically all popular music soon loses its savor be-

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[3] Albert the Great, *Mariale, sive CCXXX quaestiones super Evangelium Missus est,* in *Opera Omnia* (ed. Borgnet: Paris, Vives, 1898), XXXVII, q. 105.

[4] *Loc. cit.*

[5] *Breviarium S.O.P.* (Rome: S. Sabina), II, p. 824.

[6] Lehner, *op. cit.,* p. 69.

[7] Herbert E. Cory, *The Significance of Beauty in Nature and Art* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1947), p. 173.

cause of its essential emptiness. This is an indication that we should look for that which has order, proportion, and sincerity. These are personified in Mary, as in her Son, to the highest degree. They are also evident in the works of such composers as Palestrina, Stravinsky, and Mozart. They are especially evident in Gregorian chant.

Thus, we can see that Mary is a beacon guiding us through the dangers of immoral secular music and the shallowness of uninspired religious music. She offers an example of mature knowledge and feeling combined with ability and sincerity. Her *Magnificat* forever rings in our ears and her *Fiat* continues to rejoice the hearts of men.

One of the commonest ways in which Our Lady has been shown honor throughout the ages has been by song—the union of words and music. The hymns and antiphons of the Divine Office in honor of the Blessed Virgin, particularly illustrate the ability of the poet to set down the teaching of the Church concerning her. It is regrettable that oftentimes they fall on deaf ears because of the difficulty of the language or their poor rendition.

Of the vast amount of chant that exists today, some of the most melodious and varied is that composed for her. Even the modes of the chant lend themselves to expressing her virtues. Each of the eight modes of Gregorian music has a different character, and each produces a different effect. For example, the seventh and eighth modes are expressive of great joy and happiness. The seventh itself is called the angelic mode. The second mode provides an excellent idea of Mary's humility, for, in the compositions of this mode we see her bowed profoundly before God, seeking help for mankind.

On the other hand, the first mode offers us a picture of Our Lady's dignity and stateliness. The first descending passage of the Dominican *Salve* easily brings to the imagination a kneeling choir paying homage to the Queen of Heaven. Again, in the quiet yet moving dignity of the familiar first mode *Ave Maria,* a procession of those who have attained to the sublimity of heaven is presented to us.

When we consider the words of the hymns and antiphons which run through her offices and masses, we notice several recurrent themes. Mary's dignity and humility and her roles as mediatrix before God and Virgin Mother are stressed. Her part as mediatrix before the throne of God is summed up in the following stanza:

> Solve vincla reis,
> Profer lumen caecis:
> Mala nostra pelle,
> Bona cuncta posce.

The necessity on our part of petitioning God through her is made explicit in,

Monstra te esse matrem:
Sumat per te preces,
Qui pro nobis Natus
Tulit esse tuus.[8]

and by the wonderful antiphon, "Paradisi portae per te nobis apertae sunt," which again emphasizes her role as harmonizer.

Song writers will always be inspired by the beauty of Mary's virgin motherhood. It cannot be expressed more perfectly than in this antiphon: "Felix namque es sacra Virgo Maria, et omni laude dignissima, quia ex te ortus est Sol justitiae Christus Deus noster."[9] Following the same theme, it should not be out of place here to quote part of an old English poem so beautifully set to music by Benjamin Britten.

I sing of a maiden
That is makèles:
King of all kings
To her son she ches.
He came also stille
There his moder was,
As dew in Aprille
That falleth on the grass.[10]

In speaking of her role as Mother, the poet uses the concept of the finite including the infinite when he says that she contains the artificer of the world within the ark of her womb. Thus;

O gloriosa Domina,
Excelsa supra sidera:
Qui te creavit provide
Lactasti sacro ubere.[11]

From the truth of these verses, we can see that Mary is accorded praise because of her eminence over other women and because of her virgin motherhood. Many of the poets of the fifteenth century failed to emphasize the Divinity of Christ the God Man, with the result that they lost sight of the Divine Motherhood of the Virgin. Therefore, these early

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[8] Break the sinners' fetters
Light to blind restoring,
All our ills dispelling,
Every boon imploring.

Show thyself a Mother
In thy supplication;
He will hear who chose thee
At His Incarnation.
Aquinas Byrnes, O.P., editor, *Hymns of the Dominican Missal and Breviary* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1943), p. 262.

[9] *Breviarium S.O.P., op. cit.*, p. 829.

[10] Sister M. Therese, *I Sing of a Maiden* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947), p. 86.

[11] O glorious Lady, throned in light,
Sublime above the starry height:
Thine arms thy great Creator prest,
A suckling at thy sacred breast.
Byrnes, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

hymns also serve to protect men in their weakness from making similar errors.

These poems have their widest appeal when sung. The simplicity and yet deep maturity of Gregorian chant makes it an ideal medium for the singer. With this one-voiced music it is possible for many to sing together. If the chant is beautifully and prayerfully sung, there is no music that can compare with it for use in the liturgy.

To touch upon all that has been written in honor of Mary or that reflects her beauty, would be impossible in this paper. The praise due to her lives in Gregorian chant. But this praise has been given further life in the works of our great composers—in Bach's heavenly *Magnificat,* in the music of Palestrina, Pergolesi, Duprés, and many others. Nor is all of this music vocal. We have the beautiful compositions written by Peeters, Muset, Benōit, which for the most part are based on Gregorian themes.

Through the ages, then, we have praised Mary with music, and she, as a Mother, has helped us. Throughout the day she is with us. At night, when raising our voices during Compline,

> something like an echo of the ancestral terror of night thrills in the voice of the monk which assumes a truly nocturnal semitone accent; 'Procul recedant somnia et noctium phantasmata,' here cometh the dark with all its cortege of dreams, nightmares, and demons. It is the hour when memories crowd in upon the brother's heart . . . but the serene chant of the *Salve Regina* mounts suddenly, glowing with trust and filial love. The monk's voice becomes tender, insinuating like that of the child he used to be, and who uttered the blessed name of his Mother before adventuring into the unknown of night.[12]

Mary reigns in heaven. There too we find music, joyful music. If we look at the "Coronation of the Virgin" painted by Fra Angelico, we will be able to imagine somewhat better the scene promised us by so many of her hymns, Mary reigning, the angels singing in her honor. In the middle of the picture is depicted the coronation. A softly undulating semi-circle of angels and saints flank the images of Christ and Mary. The saints are standing, respectfully gazing at the center scene. But the angels are dancing, singing, playing instruments, for they cannot contain their happiness. In honor of Mary their spontaneous joy reaches its height. Their dancing, in its naiveté, makes us smile. But this smile slowly changes into a feeling of awe as we are carried by the artist's power into the central group to see Mary crowned amid the splendor of music.

Malachy Quinn, O.P.

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[12] Germain Bazin, *Fra Angelico* (Paris: Hyperion Press, 1949), p. 15.

MARY'S FULLNESS OF GRACE IN THE DOCTRINE OF ST. ALBERT THE GREAT[1]

"**FOR SHE GOETH ABOUT** seeking such as are worthy of her, and she sheweth herself to them cheerfully in the ways, and meeteth them with all providence."[2] These words in a special way apply to St. Albert, who himself applied them to the Blessed Virgin. Because of the virtues of his heart and the power of his intellect, he was chosen as worthy to honor the Mother of God. Just as his holy life was a glorification of God and the Blessed Virgin, so his great mind, which encompassed the knowledge of his age, dedicated the power of its thought to the Seat of Wisdom, the light of heaven and earth that kindles the lamps of the angels. The Christian concept of Mary, Mother of God and Virgin, is exalted and yet captivating, profound and full of meaning; her queenly dignity is so majestic and gracious, her appearance so heavenly and mild that the Heart of Christ, as if impelled by some natural necessity, was attracted to her with the noblest and deepest feelings of filial devotion. This concept is so delightful that it has become the favorite subject of Christian contemplation, drawing to her the greatest and most beautiful thoughts of Christian thinkers.

St. Albert the Great, who made the mystery of the altar the subject of his study, a study carried out with faith and pervaded by heartfelt love, could not refrain from praising the Mystical Rose, the Wonderful Lily of the Valley. "Wisdom is glorious and never fadeth away, and is easily seen by them that love her, and is found by them that seek her."[3]

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[1] *Editor's note.* This article by Gerhard Esser of Ophoven, which appeared in the *Theologisch Praktische Quartal Schrift* (Linz, Germany), in 1881, is an excellent summary of St. Albert's doctrine on the plenitude of grace in Our Lady. The translator, Bro. George Nintemann, O.P., has taken certain obviously necessary liberties with the nineteenth-century style of the original. Much of the Latin in the text has been anglicized or relegated to the notes.

[2] Wis. 6:17. Albert the Great, *Mariale, Sive CCXXX Quaestiones Super Evangelium Missus est,* in *Opera Omnia* (Borgnet edition; Paris: Louis Vives, 1880), Vol. XXXVII, Prooemium.

[3] Wis. 6:13. Cf. *ibid.*

These are the words which St. Albert placed at the beginning of his *Mariale*, which is an imposing monument to his childlike love of the Blessed Virgin. With the conviction that the hand of God is not shortened and that to him who believes all things are possible, he writes:

> I set my hand to the work which depicts the beginnings of the Incarnation and the mysteries of our Redemption; I attempt it for the praise, honor, and glory of the most renowned Virgin and Mother of God who alone is honored above creatures; she moved my will, stirred me to action, saw my designs.[4]

Then from the wells of science he brings forth, not infrequently in a manner that strikes us as strange and unusual, the arguments for glorifying the Mother of God. Although his treatise is more a song of praise for the beauties and merits of the Virgin than a strictly dogmatic work, it bears shining testimony to the sagacity and learning of St. Albert, even as it expressed his great love for Mary. His teaching on the fullness of grace of the Blessed Virgin occupies the greater part of the work. The following remarks will constitute an exposition of this teaching, considering first the way in which the fullness of her grace differs from that of Christ and of the saints; secondly, the Divine Maternity as the reason and basis for this fullness; and finally, the significance of this plentitude of grace in both its positive and its negative aspects.

Mary was full of grace; 'Hail, full of grace' were the angel's words of salutation when he announced to her the great mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God. The fullness of time had come and Emmanuel was to appear and establish the new kingdom of grace. "When the fullness of time had arrived," writes St. Albert, "it was also time for the fullness of grace," which was threefold: the first was Christ's—"And we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and of truth;" the second was the privilege of the Blessed Virgin—"Ave gratia plena;" the third was that of the saints—as it was said of St. Stephen, "full of grace and fortitude."

Through the grace of union, the assumption of the human nature of Christ into personal union with Divinity, there was bestowed on Christ the man, not a mere participation in the divine holiness, not a mere resemblance to the divine nature based on created grace; rather, Christ is holy essentially *as this man*, because He is by nature the Son of God; His grace is plainly infinite, His fullness of grace is an overflowing plentiude. He was full of grace because by grace He possessed all that God has by nature.[5] Thus He possessed grace not in a particular way, but in a general and universal way, "for God doth not give the Spirit by measure" (John 3:34).[6]

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[4] *Ibid.*

[5] Christus plenus fuit graia, quia ille homo habuit omnia per gratiam, quae Deus habuit per naturam: sed praeterea nulla gratia fuit in ipso diminuta, vel otiosa, vel aliquid habuit contrarium: sed haec fuit gratia unionis. Qu. 34, 3.

[6] Cf. Qu. 34, 4.

Contrasted with Christ's grace is that of His Mother, and likewise that of the saints, which is essentially "parceled out and measured."[7] The Mother of God is human, nothing more than human, however great her dignity, however wonderful her virtues. But she alone is full of grace, full of grace in the sense that she cannot receive a higher measure of grace. Mary, then, is the greatest daughter of the Eternal Father, even if only through adoption. She stands higher than all the saints, even far above the three hierarchies of angels, for she is the mystical vessel of grace.[8] Concerning this point St. Albert suggests that, if she was not to be united herself to the Godhead, and if she herself was not to be God, then no greater fullness of grace could have been conceivable for her than that which was bestowed on her. Thus, considered in its source (insofar as Mary is the Mother of the King of grace), the fullness of her grace is like the fullness of a spring; that of her Son like the fullness of a river; and that of the saints like the fullness of a rivulet flowing out of the river.[9] So Mary is a tiny spring which grew to be a great river when she bore our Lord, who is as an aqueduct reaching from heaven to earth. From this river flows the fullness of the saints, because "of His fullness we have all received. *"Prima istarum plenitudinum omnium privat vacuitatem, secunda negat particularitatem, tertia importat redundaniam."*

Mary is, however, a creature. Although like all creatures she is finite, her position is one of immediate proximity to God. No other created being comes near to her. "No greater grace can be understood than that she should be the Mother of God, unless she herself were God."[10]

Let us now consider the second point. Inasmuch as she was not to be God, there was for her no higher grace than that of being the Mother of God. Mary was just that, the Mother of God. Contained and centered in this dignity of hers are all her other prerogatives, because the Divine Maternity is the foundation and root, keystone and crown of her fullness of grace. For if, abstractly considered, the Divine Maternity as such is not formally sanctifying, because it belongs to another order, the order of the Hypostatic Union; yet concretely considered, the Divine Maternity necessarily includes sanctification.[11] On account of this singular and incomparable privilege, the Blessed Virgin was predestined from among all, the elect of the Eternal Father, richly adorned with grace and virtue

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[7] Beatissimae virginis est gratia mensurata, cum sit creata. Qu. 34, 1.

[8] Cf. Qu. 34, 4.

[9] Differunt istae plenitudines substantialiter et originaliter. Est enim prima istarum plenitudinum, quasi fontis plenitudo, secunda quasi plenitudo fluminis, tertia quasi plenitudo rivi a flumine descendentis. *Ibid.*

[10] Hoc enim est, nisi ipsa est Deus, non posset major gratia intelligi, quam ipsa esset Dei mater. *Loc. cit.*

[11] Esse matrem Dei per naturam necessario claudit in se, esse filium Dei adoptivum. Qu. 141, 4. Cf. also 141, 2.

in order that she might become the worthy mother of a worthy Son.[12] She participated morally in the central mystery of Christian faith, and through spontaneous cooperation with special graces rose to such an eminent degree of holiness that she was deemed worthy to become "the chamber of the Word," "the bride of the Eternal Bridegroom," the palace of the Son of God, the Supreme King," "the humble dwelling of the Architect of the World." She participated physically too in the Redemption. She had for her son Him who called God His Father. Her union with the Godhead, therefore, was a substantial union; she touched upon the border of the infinite.[13]

Since she was the mother of the Son of God, the King of grace, she herself became a vessel overflowing with grace. Its fullness took up its abode in her and for this reason St. Albert applies to her the saying of St. Augustine: "This virgin was . . . . filled with a singular grace, since she had as the fruit of her womb Him Whom the universe had as God from the beginning."[14] The importance and position of the Blessed Virgin originate from her Son, and the virtues of the Son redound upon the mother. Because He is infinite, so too is her dignity; her grace is, as it were unlimited. As St. Albert says:

> We concede that she was surpassed by her Son in all privileges, but in this the praise of the mother is not lessened but exalted, because she not only bore a Son equal to herself, but a Son who was infinitely better; and for this reason the Son in some way makes the goodness of the Mother infinite; for every tree is known by its own fruit. Whence if good fruit makes a good tree, then the infinite goodness of the fruit shows the infinite goodness of the tree.[15]

In the self-abasement of God we contemplate the highest exaltation of man. If we consider the moment when the wonder of wonders was produced, when the Son of God took flesh from the womb of the Virgin, if we see the Only-begotten of the Father, before Whom all tongues are silenced and all nature trembles, humbling Himself in the form of a servant, then our gaze turns to the Mother, over whom at this moment floods a sea of holiness, making her taller than the heavens, greater than the earth, vaster than the globe, since she alone contains Him whom

[12] Cf. etiam Qu. 46, 2.: Gratia gratis data ordinatur ad gratiam gratum facientem; sed beatissima Virgo habuit gratiam gratis datam super omnem creaturam in via vel in patria existentem, in hoc quod meruit esse beatissima mater Dei: ergo et gratiam gratum facientem habuit, gratiam omnis creaturae excellentem.

[13] Inter matrem et filium est conjunctio substantialis, inter patrem et filium est participatio accidentalis; ergo inter esse filium Dei per naturam et esse Deum, et esse filium Dei per adoptionem et non esse Deum, medium est, esse matrem Dei per naturam et non esse Deum; ergo immediate post esse Deum est esse matrem Dei. Qu. 141.

[14] Illa virgo singulari gratia praeventa est et repleta, cum ipsum haberet ventris fructum, quem ex initio habuit universitas Deum. Qu. 46, 7.

[15] Concedimus quod a filio suo in omnibus privilegiis antecellitur, sed in hoc laus matris non diminutur, sed exaltatur in eo quod non tantum genuit filium sibi coaequalem, sed infinite meliorem; et ex hac parte infintat quodammodo filius bonitatem matris; omnis enim arbor ex fructu cognoscitur proprio, unde si bonitas fructus bonificat arborem, infinita bonitas in fructu adhuc ostendit infinitam in arbore bonitatem. Qu. 197.

the world cannot contain. The basis of all this is "the abyss of divinity whence flow the rivers of grace, and to which they return that they may flow again."[16]

Rooted thus in her Divine Maternity, the fullness of grace of the Blessed Virgin is twofold, comprising first a fullness of all gifts and virtues (*collectio omnium bonorum*) and secondly a complete separation from anything truly evil (*recessus ab omni malo*).

The fulness consists of the treasure of her science and virtues, which made her soul radiate with such splendor and beauty that the pleasure of the Trinity was to rest in her. Even the angels marvelled, and heaven and earth became as it were her servants. The Blessed Virgin Mary must have had, as has always and everywhere been acknowledged,[17] a very high degree of knowledge, for she alone was witness to the most profound mysteries.[18] He who lives in inaccessible light stooped down to her, and therefore to her alone was it given to know the profundity of God, to her alone was it given to have experience of such greatness.[19] Furthermore, grace and sin are opposed to each other as union with God is opposed to separation. Since the greatest fullness of grace dwelt in the Blessed Virgin, it must have led to the greatest possible union with God, and to an enlightenment of the understanding above that proper to life here below.[20] If it had been given to others, St. Albert continues,[21] to view the grandeur of God in moments of deepest contemplation, how could this have been denied to one who was dead to the life of this world, who belonged entirely to God as no other saint ever has, and who, all her life long, loved him perfectly?

In order to understand more perfectly this habitual condition of the Blessed Virgin's knowledge, it must be remembered that she did not gaze upon God as the saints in heaven do. Since she was not in the state of final beatitude, the essence of God was not the intelligible form of her intellect.[22] St. Albert outlines four distinct stages in the soul's ascent in the knowledge of God, according to the differences in the condition of the subject that is raised and of the medium by which it is raised. Souls in the first stage see God in an earthly way. They see Him in a mirror in a dark manner. This is simply the state of the "viator," the wayfarer. In the second stage, the soul sees God somewhat

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[16] Locus istarum plenitudinem est abyssus deitatis, unde exeunt flumina omnia per gratiarum effluxionem, et redeunt per gratiarum actionem, ut iterum fluant per gratiarum multiplicationem. Qu. 34, 4.

[17] Cf. Qu. 44.

[18] Si omnium secretissimum, incarnationis scilicet mysterium, ipsi soli revelavit ad plenum; ergo et nullum aliorum minus secretorum ignoravit. Qu. 65, 4. Cf. Qu. 65, 6.

[19] Sola in se felicissime meruit experiri . . . splendor inaccessibilis virgineis sese visceribus infudit . . . soli datum est nosse, cui soli datum est experiri. Qu. 44, 11.

[20] Cf. Qu. 44, 4. 7. 8.

[21] Cf. Qu. 44, 10.

[22] For this and the following reference cf. especially Qu. 61.

more clearly than the wayfarer, knowing Him in a mirror but in light. Such was the vision of Moses and the prophets. In the third stage, the soul beholds Him without a mirror but in light, as did St. Paul in the ecstasy of which he said, "I was caught up to the third heaven."[23] Such knowledge is beyond the mode proper to life here below. In the fourth stage, souls gaze upon God in the state of final beatitude; that is, they look at Him face to face. They see the uncreated light by uncreated light and without image; all others see the uncreated light by created light.[24]

Above the three degrees of knowledge given to men in this life, and in close proximity to the knowledge of the saints, stands the knowledge, the "vision" of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She is raised far above the rapt state of St. Paul in respect to the perfection of her knowledge, the habitual possession of such vision, and the nature and manner of her knowledge.[25] What St. Paul possessed actually only once and for a short time, Mary had as her own habitually and at all times, because she had become the Mother of God. She possessed this vision of God in a higher degree than any other mortal because of the fullness of light that was poured down upon her intellect, light similar to that which shone from the transfigured Christ, blinding the Apostles with its brilliance.[26] Bright sunlight, which weak eyes cannot endure, is both delightful and agreeable to the healthy; in the same way, the brilliance that poured from the Godhead and blinded the Apostles on Tabor and St. Paul in ecstasy, was agreeable to the Blessed Virgin, who in her purity surpassed all other creatures.[27]

According to St. Albert, then, Mary knew and understood the mystery of the Trinity as well as the mystery of the Incarnation. She also knew that she had been predestined to the highest glory. She knew everything in this life that could serve her happiness. She not only saw the saints of the Kingdom but even the evil spirits.[28] Can we say then that she knew all things? St. Albert answers:

> We say that the Blessed Virgin was sufficiently perfected through a habit of nature and of grace to perform the operations and to attain the end of every science. And her science was active and operative when, where, and in a manner and degree conducive to her happiness and the salvation of others.[29]

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[23] II Cor. 12.

[24] Statement of Qu. 61, para. 5.

[25] Qu. 61. Response to Qu. 44, para. 1.

[26] Habitus possessionem dico: quia talis habitus est actus, qualem habuit Paulus in raptu ad tempus, et post statim non habuit, sed habitus cum actu cessavit; talis, inquam, generis habitum sed perfectionem beatissima virgo semper et continuo habuit. Qu. 61, resp., para. 1.

[27] *Ibid.*

[28] Qu. 111. Response to Qu. 95. 96.

[29] Dicimus quod beata virgo sufficienter perfecta fuit per habitum naturae et gratiae in operationes exire et finem consequi cujuslibet scientiae. Et haec scientia exivit in actum et operationem, quando, ubi, qualter et quantum ordinabatur sibi in beatitudinem et aliis in salutem. Qu. 111.

Her habit of faith and hope is bound closely to this habit of her knowledge. "She was Empress of all in the constancy of faith; it never failed her, nor was it ever interrupted, because it was incapable of being lost."[30] No other creature came near her in faith in God and confidence in His omnipotence and goodness. The deep belief in God which was hers surpassed that of Abraham, just as the promise which was made to her was greater than that given to the father of her race. Her faith then is the crown of that of the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Law. She pronounced her *fiat* believingly and with trustful confidence when she was told that the Son of God would be born from her, a virgin. In this hour of decision she exhibited a faith even greater than that which Our Lord demanded of the Apostles when He said, "If you say to this mountain, 'Take up and cast thyself into the sea,' it shall be done" "Be it done unto me according to thy word," she said, and an even greater thing happened: the Son of God became man.[31]

After she became the Mother of God, her faith was compatible with her knowledge, for as St. Albert says: "A twofold habit can exist in one and the same subject at the same time: the one (in this case the habit of her knowledge) for a less perfect act; the other (that of her faith) for a more perfect act."[32] Yet Mary did not behold the essence of God. She did not yet know Him as He is. Therefore, her intellect was not yet godlike even though it came closest to that degree of elevation which belongs to the other life.[33]

The Blessed Virgin was also completely dead to this life. Living as did her Divine Son a life hidden in God, her dwelling place was the sanctuary of God. He to whom more has been given must love more, and since gifts had been bestowed on her in the highest measure, she must have loved more than any other creature. "Charity, which calls men to God, is a separation from lower things, an elevation to heaven."[34] No one possessed such a high degree of separation from earthly things as did the Blessed Virgin. Because no shadow of sin ever rested upon her, the purity of her soul was greater than any mind can comprehend. "Where there is greater purity, there is greater charity." Moreover, St. Albert asks, if no one can love more than a mother, how great must Mary's love for God have been, since she was His Mother? She had already a charismatic grace which surpassed that possessed by any other

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[30] Cf. Qu. 112.

[31] Cf. Qu. 112, 5. 6.

[32] Cf. Qu. 61. Response, para. 1.

[33] Actus qui est in raptu, potest esse cum habitu fidei, sed non e converso fidei actus cum habitu raptus. Quamdiu est in potentia habitus fidei, tamdiu est aliquid de obscuritate et non ita plene depurata sicut in statu comprehensorum, est tamen illi depurationi simillima, quae est in patria, quando potentia erit deiformis. *Loc. cit.*

[34] Charitas quae ad Deum evocat, est a terrenis separatio, ad coelum elevatio. Qu. 83.

creature on earth as well as in heaven, because she was the Mother of God. Therefore she must also have had sanctifying grace far superior to that of any other creature.[35]

St. Albert's conclusion is as follows: "As a habit her charity was greater than that of every angel, but it was less as regards act, because of the condition and state of the subject in which it was."

In making a comparison of the love of the Blessed Virgin with that of the angels we must first of all remember that the love of God in this life and in the state of final beatitude is the same in substance.[36] In order that love in this world be transformed into the perfection of love in the next, the subject must pass through three stages: purgation, recollection, and elevation.

Purgation consists in the removal of everything which leads or can lead man away from God, the Eternal Good, to the apparent goods of this world. Recollection—*collectio omnium actuum et affectuum in se*—enables the spirit to enter into itself and so begin the ascent towards God. "Withdrawing from the bodily senses and beyond the flesh and wordly affections, one speaks to oneself alone and to God." Elevation is effected "by grace lifting us up and by God attracting us," causing the spirit to rise to the heights "in loftiest union with the Supreme Good."[37]

It is evident from this that the love of the Blessed Virgin was in regard to its *substance* more perfect than the love of the angels. But considered from the aspect of *act*, it was less than that of the lowest angel. The reason for this is the fact that she was not in the closest communication with the Highest Good, because she was not as close to God as the angels who behold Him face to face. The Blessed Virgin was not yet in a state "where the whole being of her soul was filled with that most noble habit, and charity alone reduces the soul to act." From this aspect, then, her love was less than the love of the angels. But in the substance of her love, she far surpassed them.

If God were to take the Beatific Vision from the highest angel, its love would be far inferior to what Mary's was. Consequently the reward for her love was a crown of blessedness far more glorious than that of all the angels.[38] Thus the Blessed Virgin, while here on earth, had a love so great that it approached that of the saints in heaven. In this love, she offered all she did and all she had to God. Again the culmination of her love coincided with the great act of love shown by her Son on

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[35] Cf. Qu. 46, 1. 2. 3. 4.

[36] Glorificatio charitatis, sicut glorificatio corporis fit sine extrinseca adjectione, et eadem substantia charitas viae et charitas pratriae est. Qu. 61. Response 2.

[37] Concerning this and the following reference, cf. Qu. 61. Response 2.

[38] Actus charitatis fuit actus meritorius vitae aeternae et beatitudinis, beatitudinem omnium Angelorum transcendentis. *Loc. cit.*

the Cross. St. Albert says that in the Redemption, she freely offered God her Son, Whom she loved more than life. In this dreadful scene of suffering our eyes turn from Christ dying on the cross to the loving mother standing in unutterable agony, transfigured by the pain of sacrifice. Because her Son's work of love is seen to be even greater, the scene becomes at once more sublime and overpowering and more poignant and moving.[39] Thus she became the Queen of Martyrs, the High Priestess of the New Law. "By her spontaneous consent she offered [her Son] in His passion for all of us. Through this pleasing and all-suffiicent victim, offered once, she reconciled God to the whole human race."[40]

Since love for God is the measure of every other gift, the Blessed Virgin possessed the cardinal virtues and all the virtues annexed to them as they are possessed in heaven, but in a way proper to life here below. The Saints can use them to produce perfect acts, but cannot merit by them; the living merit by them, but the acts of virtue which they produce are always imperfect. The Blessed Virgin, however, was able both to merit and to produce perfect acts of virtue.[41] Thus, Mary's adornment of virtues is like a jewel flashing with many colors, "more varied, more useful, more noble, more glorious, and more praiseworthy" than the adornment of the angels. For us, she represents the most perfect purely human ideal of virtue. *Omnibus exemplum virtutis exstitit.*

It follows too that she possessed the seven gifts in a way beyond what is proper to life on earth. More explicitly, she possessed the intellectual gifts of wisdom, understanding, knowledge and counsel in a degree of perfection, both habitual and actual, beyond what is proper to this life; but not in the degree of actual perfection proper to the state of final beatitude. She possessed the gifts of fortitude, piety, and fear of the Lord, on the other hand, in a degree proper to final beatitude, even as regards actual perfection.[42]

Because the Spirit of the Lord rested upon her, she also possessed in the highest measure the fruits of the Holy Ghost named by the Apostle (Gal. 5:22), "charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity."[43] The Blessed Virgin is then the treasury of all gifts and virtues, the tabernacle of the Most High. The Kingdom of God was in her, the kingdom of peace, justice and joy in the Holy Ghost. St. Albert says of her whole life:

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[39] Propriam animam in passione Filii crucifixit cum Filio, et sic duas animas obtulit sicque effectum dilectionis duplicavit. Qu. 61. Response 2.

[40] Spontaneo ejus consensu in filii passione pro nobis omnibus obtulit, per quam sufficientissimam et gratissimam hostiam semel oblatam, Deum toto generi humano reconciliavit. Qu. 75. Qu. 78, 4. 5. 6. Qu. 90.

[41] Cf. Qu. 61. Response 3 ad Qu. 50-61.

[42] Cf. Qu. 69. Response ad Qu. 61-68.

[43] C. Qu. 81. Response 2.

> In the soul of the most Blessed Virgin there was nothing useless, nothing irrelevant. It was completely full of grace. Whence all things natural or acquired that were in her soul, were either informed by grace or joined with grace, so that all was given freely. All her knowledge, every act of love and every operation, was gratuitous. Therefore without any restriction whatsoever, she was "full of grace" of every kind, in the broadest and truest understanding of that phrase.[44]

Mary's status is properly the state of a wayfarer and only somewhat like that of the Blessed; a complement as it were to the status of her Son and midway between the state of the Blessed and the state of the wayfarer.[45]

St. Albert gives us a more concise treatment of Mary's fullness of grace from the negative side, that is, insofar as it is a separation from anything truly evil.

Her perpetual virginity constitutes the link with this second side of her fullness of grace.[46] Through this, the greatest of her privileges, she was raised uniquely and incomparably above all other creatures. The lily of her purity is united to her dignity as Mother of God in such a way that there was no one like her either before or after. These two privileges are bound closely together; they are inseparable. Because of her maternity, she had for her Son Him Whom the Almighty Father called His only-begotten Son, Him Who would be given by the Father to be the life of the world only insofar as He was by nature both the Son of God the Father and of the Virgin Mother.[47] The perfection of this Offspring naturally required the most perfect mother because her Son was the God-man.[48] These two ideas permeate each other; one leads to and implies the other. A virgin the mother had to be, because the Son of God was the Son of Man. St. Albert expressed this beautifully when he wrote,

> The Blessed Virgin was indeed the 'brave woman' who joined the two extremes, deity and humanity, in one person, because she gave birth to that Wisdom which reaches from the extreme of deity to the extreme of humanity.[49]

Freely she offered to the eternal Father her noblest and most precious possession, her virginity. He gave it back to her even more beautiful

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[44] Anima beatissimae virginis nulla habuit in se inutilia vel impertinentia, sed per totum gratiae fuit plena, unde omnia, quae fuerunt in ejus anima, vel naturalia vel acquisita, sic erant gratia informata vel cum gratia conjuncta, ut omnia essent gratuita; omnis scientia ejus gratuita, omnis dilectio gratuita, omnis operatio gratuita, ita ut sine omni restrictone, largissima ac verissima inerpretatione esset omnifaria gratia plena. Qu. 111.

[45] Cf. Qu. 48. Qu. 61. Response 2.

[46] Maternitas fuit ei collatio omnis boni, virginitas prout fuit in beatissima virgine, fuit recessus ab omni malo. Qu. 142, 8.

[47] Cf. Qu. 139. Response.

[48] Ad perfectam generationem sequitur secundum naturam perfectissima maternitas, sed perfectior et nobilior est maternitas cum incorruptione, quam cum corruptione; sed ista fuit perfectissima: ergo debuit esse cum virginitate: ergo debuit esse mater virgo.

[49] Fortis mulier est beatissima virgo quae ultimos fines, scilicet deitatem et humanitatem in unam personam conjunxit, gignendo sapientiam, quae attingit a fine deitatis usque finem humanitatis fortiter. Qu. 11, 1.

and full of splendor. She removed the shame which had until then attached to virginity. She sanctified, blessed, and transfigured it by becoming the mother of virgins, the virgin of virgins.[50] Before her, all dignity and blessing were bestowed upon women insofar as they were mothers, so that the highest dignity—to be a mother while a virgin—might crown the mother of God, and so that the blessing of virginity might flow from the virgin of virgins.[51] This virgin became "the cause and principle of all the other Saints, because of the highest purity of her virginity, her immunity from sin, and the impossibility of her sinning."

We must now hold that Mary was free from all sin, personal as well as original. As the Immaculate Conception, Holy Mother Church addresses her on her feast day; as the Immaculate Conception, all her true sons acclaim her. Although St. Albert himself, relying on the authority of St. Anselm and St. Bernard, did not teach this truth, he still came very close to the dogma of the Immaculate Conception as now defined. It was his belief that the Blessed Virgin was conceived in original sin but was at once cleansed from it.[52] He goes even further to say that from the first moment of her conception she was so completely sanctified that she was no longer capable of commiting, even once, an actual sin.

> The Blessed Virgin excelled all in sanctification, because others after their sanctification have sinned at least venially; but she herself was so sanctified that she was unable to sin.[53]

Mary was free from any personal sin and therefore the words of St. John; "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves,"[54] cannot apply to her. Even in the eyes of Him before Whom heaven itself is not pure, she shines with the brilliance of purity. The greatness and dignity of her Son demanded the highest purity. The sanctuary of the Most High was not to be defiled by coming under the domination of the Prince of this world. Because she was the Mother of God, no spot of sin was to disfigure her. For this reason, she was entirely beautiful and no stain was permitted in her,[55] so that in her there was the greatest possible fullness of grace. From this it follows that she approached to the first light to the extent that it is possible for mere creatures to attain to some likeness to God. Because she was endowed with grace in the

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[50] Beatissima virgo excellit omnes matres in maternitate, et omnes virgines in virginitate, quas quidem dupliciter excellit: originaliter: quia omnes alias virgines Deo generavit per imitatonem quae primo votum virginitatis opprobrium virginitatis abstulit et eam consecravit in se; specialiter: propter excellentiam, quia ipsa sola excellit omnes alias virgines. Qu. 144. and Qu. 11, 4.

[51] Cf. Qu. 11, IV.

[52] Debuit quidem beata virgo in originali concipi, sed statim ab illo mundari. Qu. 127, 5.

[53] Quod beatae virginis sanctificatio omnes excellit, in hoc notatur, quod alii post talem sanctificationem ad minus venialiter peccaverunt, ipsa autem ita sanctificata fuit, quod peccare non potuit. Qu. 127, 6.

[54] I John 1:8.

[55] Cf. Qu. 137 and Qu. 138.

highest degree, she approached to this light in the highest degree and therefore to the highest purity.[56]

Mary was not only free from actual sin; she *could* not sin, because she was free from every imperfect desire and from all tendencies toward sin.[57] As it was not fitting that she should be a sinner, so it was not fitting that she should be capable of sin. From the fact that she never had the *act* of sin it follows that she did not have the *capacity* to sin.[58] It was not that Mary was free from sin and the possibility of sin in consequence of an intrinsic necessity resulting from her nature in and through herself, as is the case with God, or as a result of a union and attraction to the Highest Good through a medium which is absolutely inseparable from nature, such as the habit of glory. Rather, she was free from sin because of a special grace from God which freed her from every imperfect desire so that the medium of her elevation (her fullness of grace), though separable in and by itself from her nature, still could not actually be separated from it.[59]

The Blessed Virgin acquired this purity not instantaneously but by degrees. It became perfect when she conceived the Eternal Light, at which time the 'fomes peccati,' until then only kept in control and bound, was completely extinguished. With this gradual increase of purity in mind, St. Albert sees four important points in the process of her purification: her sanctification in the womb of her mother, her practice of virtue, her overshadowing by the Holy Ghost, and her conception of Christ. To her sanctification in the womb he applied the words, "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is no spot in thee;" to her practice of virtue, "He regarded the humility of his handmaid;" to her overshadowing, "The Most High sanctified his tabernacle;" and to her conception of Christ, "the majesty of the Lord went into the temple; the house was filled with the glory of the Lord."[60]

Because the Blessed Virgin was free from sin she was also free from penalty of sin. But because she willed to be like her Son in all things, she remained subject until the end of her life to physical defects, even death. In the end, however, her immeasurable love of God and her longing for Him caused her soul to leave the body painlessly.[61] But Christ could not bear to see that pure body decay. He rose from the

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[56] Qu. 138, 9. 10. 11. Qu. 139. Response.

[57] Qu. 94, 2.

[58] Cf. Qu. 134, 6. 3. 4.

[59] Beata virgo dicitur non posse peccare, quod habet conjunctionem ad naturam invertibilem per medium, quod secundum naturam suam et in se quidem est separabile, sed omnino non est separatum ab aliquo contrario repugnante, vel resistente, vel impediente et sic in summo in ea est inseparabile: et haec est gratiarum plenitudo. Qu. 134.

[60] Ezechiel 43.4, 5. Cf. Qu. 139, Response.

[61] Qu. 132. Solution.

dead, so should she. He ascended body and soul into heaven, so should she.[62]

Mary, the creature most full of grace upon earth, is the most glorious inhabitant of heaven. Because her fullness of grace is unique and incomparable, her crown of merit is brilliant and luminous in the same degree. Her glory is incomprehensible. She is raised above the saints and above the choirs of the angels, to be seated beside her Son at the right hand of the Triune God, as the Queen of Heaven. "Because of my poor talent, what can I say concerning you, O Virgin Mary?" exclaimed St. Albert with St. Augustine. "Whatever I have said, gives less praise than your dignity merits. If I call you heaven, you are higher; if I say that you are the mother of all peoples, you are more; if I call you the form of God, you are worthy; if I say that you are the Queen of the Angels, you excel even this."[63] In every truth, the Lord who is mighty has done great things to her.[64]

One word more: the Queen of Heaven is our mother. The words of her dying Son on the cross sealed the bond of love between the Mother of God and mankind. Because she is the mother of the Head of the Church, she is also the mother of its members. She has given a second birth to all in God, "because she gave birth to one man in whom all were regenerated. In bearing her first-born Son, she bore for us whatever was necessary for this life and the life to come. With Him, she gave us all things."[65]

From her hands flow graces and blessing which she bestows on all her children. She is forever our Mediatrix, our advocate, our channel of grace. For this reason, the trusting heart of the child prays to its Mother; for this reason, millions of voices greet her daily with the cry: "Hail Mary, full of grace." And for this reason the Church, our second Mother, after saluting Mary, her model, as Queen of Heaven and Mistress of the Angels, acclaims her with the words:

Gaude virgo gloriosa,
Super omnes speciosa;
Vale, o valde decora,
Et pro nobis Christum exora.[66]

Gerhard Esser
George Nintemann, O.P.,
Translator

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[62] Non potuit mortis nexibus deprimi, quae Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum de se genuit incarnatum. Qu. 132.

[63] Sed de te o virgo Maria, quid dicam pauper ingenio, eum quidquid dixero, minor laus est, quam dignitas tua meretur? Si coelum appellem, tu altior es; si matrem gentium dicam, praecedis; si formam Dei appellem, digna existis; si dominam Angelorum vocitem, te supra esse probaris. Qu. 151, 9.

[64] Cf. Qu. 145.

[65] Quia unum hominem genuit, in quo omnes regeneravit. In filio primogenito nobis genuit, quidquid ad hanc vitam et futuram necessarium nobis fuit, nobis omnia cum illo donavit. Cf. Qu. 145.

[66] "Rejoice, o glorious Virgin, beautiful above all women; farwell, o lovely one, and pray to Christ for us." From a hymn in honor of the Blessed Virgin.

CHRONICLE

Recent additions to the Faculty of Theology at Saint Rose Priory are the Very Reverend Peter R. O'Brien, O.P., S.T.M., and the Reverend Reginald R. Masterson, O.P., S.T.D. Father O'Brien is an Ex-provincial of Saint Albert's Province and formerly taught at the Studium of Saint Thomas Aquinas in River Forest, Illinois. The Reverend Austin Green, O.P., S.T.Lr. and the Reverend Ralph Powell, O.P., Ph.D., are newcomers to the faculty of the Studium in River Forest.

On Sunday, June 30, the Very Reverend J. B. Walker, O.P., the Very Reverend J. N. Walsh, O.P., the Very Reverend J. I. Reardon, O.P., the Very Reverend J. A. Driscoll, O.P., and the Reverend L. E. Nugent, O.P., celebrated their twenty-five year jubilee with a Mass of Thanksgiving at the House of Studies, River Forest. The Very Reverend J. S. Considine, O.P., their former student-master, preached a sermon on the priesthood. The Very Reverend Edward L. Hughes, O.P. Provincial of our Province was present for the occasion.

Following word of the death of the Master General, the Very Reverend Emmanuel Suarez, O.P., on June 30, a Solemn High Requiem Mass was celebrated at the River Forest House of Studies. Father Provincial delivered an informal eulogy in which he spoke of the work Father Suarez had performed for Saint Albert's Province. On July 10 a Solemn Mass was celebrated in the Church of Saint Pius by the provincial. Father Leonard J. Callahan, O.P., editor of *Cross and Crown,* preached the sermon and emphasized in a special way the manner in which the late Master General had embodied the spirit of Saint Dominic in his governance of the Order. Members of the Order from the entire Chicago area as well as many sisters and priests of the diocese were present at the Mass.

On June 30, the Very Reverend J. R. Gillis, O.P., S.T.M., took part in a panel discussion of the American Theological Society at its meeting in Montreal, Canada. The subject of the panel was "Infused Contemplation as the Normal Term of the Contemplative Life."

During the summer the Albertus Magnus Lyceum devoted its efforts to the special program for education of sisters at Saint Xavier College in Chicago. The courses were well received by over one hundred teachers who took part in the sessions.

Classes for the Spiritual Institute opened on June 28 in River Forest and ended on July 30, during which time sixty-six priests and religious were in attendance. The Institute was honored by the presence of His Eminence, Samuel Cardinal Stritch, for the conferring of degrees. His Eminence spoke of the need for mystical and ascetical theology in the spiritual life and in the work of the priest, and thanked the members of the Order of Preachers for their initiative and cooperation in satisfying this need.

On Wednesday, September 15, His Excellency, the Most Reverend Amleto G. Cicognani, Apostolic Delegate to the United States, presided at the dedication of Mount Saint Bernard Provincial Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa. The dedication ceremonies were attended by more than thirty bishops and members of the higher and lower clergy.

The Saint Pius X Minor Seminary was dedicated on Thursday, October 28 at Loras College, Dubuque. His Eminence, Thomas Cardinal Tien, Archbishop of Pekin, China, presided at the Solemn Pontifical Mass. His Excellency, the Most Reverend William P. O'Connor, Bishop of Madison, Wisconsin was celebrant; the sermon was delivered by His Excellency, the Most Reverend John F. O'Hara, Archbishop of Philadelphia.

The Marian lectures given on Friday evenings throughout the month of October formed an appropriate finale for the Marian Year Program at Saint Rose Priory. The topics and speakers for the series were as follows: Oct. 1, *Mary's Fullness of Grace,* given by the Very Reverend J. J. McDonald, O.P.; Oct. 8, *Mary's Immunity from the Remains of Sin* by the Reverend J. F. Connell, O.P.; Oct. 15, *Mary's Virginity and Vow,* by the Reverend T. C. Donlan, O.P.; Oct. 22, *The Marriage of Mary and Joseph,* by the Reverend J. J. Hagan, O.P.; Oct. 29, *The Exaltation of Mary,* delivered by the Reverend E. F. Klueg, O.P.

This fall at the Pontifical Faculty of Philosophy in River Forest, the professors gave a series of Marian lectures to the assembled Community. The topics and speakers were as follows: Sept. 30, *Mary, Seat of Wisdom,* given by the Very Rev. Sebastian Carlson, O.P., Regent of Studies; Oct. 7, *The Immaculate Conception and Mary's Queenship,* by the Reverend Urban Mullaney, O.P.; Oct. 12, *Mary the Mother of God,* by the Very Reverend G. R. Joubert, O.P., Prior; Oct. 18, *Prophecies Fulfilled in Mary,* by the Very Reverend J. S. Considine, O.P.; Oct. 28, *Conceived without Sin,* by the Reverend J. T. Bonée, O.P.; Nov. 12, *A Prophetic Portrait of Mary,* by the Reverend Barnabas-Mary Ahern, C.P.; Nov. 19, *Mary Mediatrix,* by the Reverend B. M. Ashley, O.P.; Nov. 23, *Mary's Fullness of Grace,* by the Very Reverend M. P. Clancy, O.P., Subprior; and Dec. 3, *St. Thomas and Mariology,* by the Reverend L. B. Cunningham, O.P., of St. Rose Priory.

The following professors of the Studium read papers at the annual meeting of the Fathers of the Province, held this year at St. Pius Priory

in Chicago, November 10 and 11: the Reverend B. M. Ashley, *Mary Help of Christians and Mediatrix of all Graces;* the Reverend L. B. Cunningham, *The Assumption; Heaven and the Object of Christian Hope;* the Reverend M. J. Faraon, *The Immaculate Heart of Mary, Mother of Love.* The theme of this meeting was the Marian Year. The Very Reverend E. L. Hughes, O.P., S.T.M., Provincial, presided at the sessions of the Annual Meeting; the Very Reverend J. S. Considine, O.P., S.T.M., was chairman.

The Marian Year was fittingly closed at the River Forest Studium by a novena of Holy Hours dedicated to Our Lady. At each of the Holy Hours, a sermon was preached by the Very Reverend J. L. Callahan, O.P., S.T.M., Ex-Provincial. At the Solemn Mass on December 8, the Very Reverend J. R. Joubert, O.P., preached on the Immaculate Conception and the Queenship of Mary.

Current publications by members of the Faculty of Theology are, *A Primer of Theology,* Vol. II, by the Reverend T. C. Donlan, O.P.; *The Indwelling of the Trinity, A Historico-Doctrinal Study of the Theory of St. Thomas Aquinas,* by the Reverend F. L. B. Cunningham, O.P.; and *The Superiority of Apostolic Religious Orders Derived from Their End,* by the Reverend J. F. Connell, O.P. The first two of these books are published by The Priory Press, Dubuque.

On November 14, the vigil of the Feast of St. Albert the Great, the seventy-fifth anniversary of Leo XIII's *Aeterni Patris* was solemnly celebrated by the Pontifical Faculty of Philosophy in River Forest. Brother Theodore Trimble read a paper written by himself and Bro. Anthony Schillaci on the historical and contemporary background of the Encyclical. This paper was followed by a lecture given by the Reverend Benedict Ashley, O.P., on the results of the Encyclical and the status of Thomism today.